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**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**BUNKER HILL MONUMENT**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
**1907**

10/10



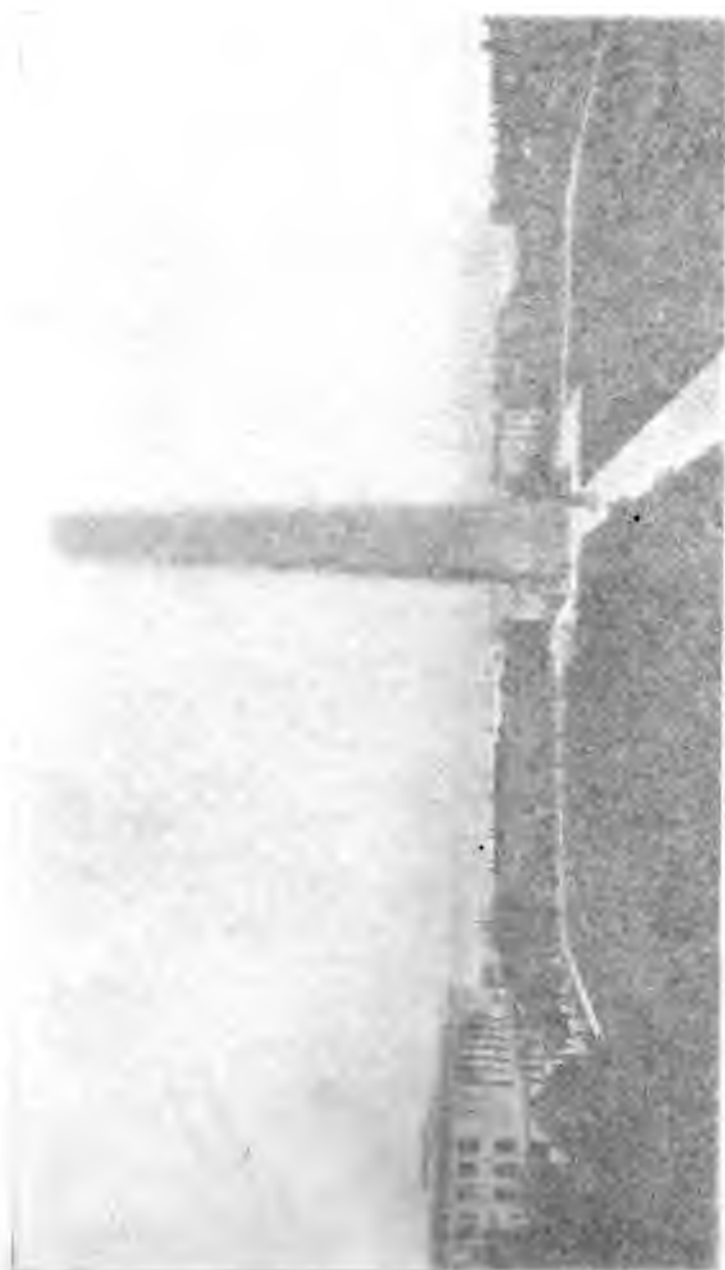




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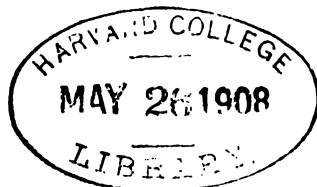
PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BUNKER HILL MONUMENT  
ASSOCIATION  
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 17, 1907



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## PROCEEDINGS.

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BOSTON, June 17, 1907.

THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION held its ANNUAL MEETING at 10 o'clock this day at the Hotel Vendôme. The President, Dr. JOHN COLLINS WARREN, occupied the Chair.

Reverend PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM, of the Arlington Street Church, offered prayer.

The Records of the last Annual Meeting were read.

Mr. E. C. MARSHALL called attention to the fact that a resolution offered by him at the last Annual Meeting, and referred to the Standing Committee, had not been entered in the record in full. Action on the motion of Mr. MARSHALL was taken at a later stage of the Meeting.

The President delivered his Annual Address on "The Future of Monument Square."

Colonel HORACE NEWTON FISHER addressed the Association on "The Objective at Bunker Hill."

The Annual Report of the Treasurer, together with that of the Auditors, was presented in print. They were severally accepted and ordered to be placed on file.

It was voted that the Addresses of the PRESIDENT and Colonel FISHER be referred to the Standing Committee with directions to print and distribute them in the usual manner.

The Association then elected as Resident Members the persons who had been recommended by the Standing Committee.

Mr. E. C. MARSHALL asked what disposition had been made by the Standing Committee of the resolution offered by him at the last Annual Meeting commendatory of PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT. On being told that it had been referred to the Committee and by them laid on the table as relating to a subject foreign to the purposes of the Association, he moved and it was voted that the same be taken from the Standing Committee and brought once more before the Association. As the original motion of Mr. MARSHALL was then before the Association, on motion of Mr. W. R. THAYER it was laid on the table; but one vote was given in the negative.

Messrs. C. F. READ, WINSLOW WARREN, and E. C. BATTIS were appointed by the Chair as a Nominating Committee, and on their recommendation the officers named on page 10 were elected for the coming year.

The thanks of the Association were voted to the PRESIDENT and Colonel FISHER for their valuable Addresses.

Mr. ERVING WINSLOW offered the following motion. It was passed unanimously.

That such portion of the PRESIDENT's Address as recommends a reform in the manner of celebrating the Anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill be referred to the Standing Committee, with a request that, as soon as may be, they take such action thereupon as may lead to a popular and cheerful, but decent and appropriate, commemoration of the great event.

At the request of the PRESIDENT it was voted that a letter received by him from the Charlestown Improvement Association suggesting that some public recognition of the day might be taken on the grounds in future years be referred to the Standing Committee with full power.

A letter from Miss SUSAN B. WILLARD of Hingham, asking that the Association do something in recognition of the valuable services to the Association of her ancestor, SOLOMON WILLARD, was referred to the Standing Committee.

The Annual Meeting of the Association was then dissolved.

1651  
1652  
1653





THE PINE

THE PINE

THE PINE

THE PINE

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BOSTON

THE ASSOCIATION

1881



house in Bowdoin Square, and see what is going on upon the slopes of the hills of Charlestown. The view now presents a tangled mass of smoke stacks, grain elevators, and overhanging iron bridge work that shuts out all view, not only of the historic grounds, but even of the noble old monument itself.

Nor is this difficulty remedied by a nearer approach, for nowhere do the main routes of travel lead to a point where the view opens out and a vista of the monument and grounds can be obtained.

The ingenuity of man could hardly have devised a scheme by which a monumental structure massive in its proportions, and situated upon the top of a hill, could have been more completely concealed. A glance, however, at the topography of the Charlestown peninsula will show some of the difficulties with which the early city builders had to contend.

The first of the sketches or plans which I shall show you this morning is that made by Trumbull, and represents Charlestown as it was at the breaking out of the Revolution. Here we have the picture of a promontory with three hills projecting into the waters of the harbor, the small collection of dwellings nestling at their feet being hardly discernible. In De Bernier's map of the battle, which represents the peninsula at the same period, we see indicated the hill at Morton's Point, Breeds Hill, where was situated the redoubt, and Bunker's Hill. Breeds Hill, it will be observed, is the most central point, and around the base of this hill there winds a road which communicates somewhat indirectly with the main avenue leading from the village across the isthmus to the main land.

Timothy Dwight, in his "Travels in New England and New York," has commented with considerable severity on the neglect of the inhabitants of Charlestown, on their return after the evacuation, to lay out the town on new lines with reference not only to a greater convenience, but also for æsthetic

reasons. They were not without enterprise, however, and the completion of a bridge across the bay was celebrated on the 17th of June, 1786, the first celebration of this anniversary. A few years later, in 1794, King Solomon's Lodge erected a monument to the memory of General Warren and his associates on the spot where he was killed. James Russell gave the land and the monument was erected in "Russell's Pasture," as it was then called. This pasture soon became an object of interest to travellers. There were but few tourists, however, in those days. A daily stage coach furnished all the accommodation necessary for travel.

In Tufts's map of 1818 we find a record of this monument, and we find also that the village had grown to be a town, the outskirts of which were already occupying portions of the hill and encroaching upon the battlefield. Building operations were going on apace, and land in this neighborhood was advertised for sale at auction, and old landmarks were in danger of obliteration. This was the situation when attention was first called to the importance of saving at least a portion of the battlefield, and the first steps were taken which led eventually to the formation of this Association in 1823. In the following year some fifteen acres were acquired by the Association, King Solomon's Lodge surrendering their claims to the land on which their monument stood and entrusting the monument itself to the care of the Association.

Owing to the financial difficulties which arose during the building of the obelisk, it became necessary to part with several acres of land which surrounded the immediate reservation for the monument. The ground east and west of the square was cut down from eight to twelve feet, and a portion of the earth was used to grade the northern declivity. Ten acres, nearly two-thirds of the original purchase, were sold and a large part of the old battlefield was thus permanently

abandoned, but a portion of the land, amounting in all to nearly an acre, was dedicated to public use as highways on three sides of Monument Square, with the expectation that these would be developed and extended by the town, an expectation that was only reluctantly and imperfectly fulfilled. Another opportunity was lost by the city authorities to work out a comprehensive plan upon which the modern Charlestown could have been developed.

In 1847, that is a few years after the completion of the monument, the Association addressed the Charlestown City Government and made them a liberal offer of money to open a street to Main Street, and in 1850 a street forty feet wide was laid out from High Street (on the square) to Warren Street, but it was not until 1866, and after a protracted and laborious negotiation with the city government, that the street was continued through to Main Street. Unfortunately the street, in deference to the wish of landholders, was thrown too far to the west, and the monument is not on a line parallel with the centre of the street. Although this street opened on one of the main avenues of the city, it failed to expose the monument to view from what at that time was the central and commanding point of view as one entered the city, — namely, City Square.

It was from this point that streets radiated in various directions, but all avoiding the great artistic feature of the peninsula, — the monument. As was stated in the Proceedings for 1874 (page 52): "Here is an object of great historical and æsthetic interest without any direct and handsome approach, and which can be seen from no point in the city under the advantageous circumstances it deserves."

Accordingly, in 1868, the Association, under the leadership of that enthusiastic and loyal member, President George Washington Warren, petitioned the mayor and aldermen of the city of Charlestown to have an avenue laid out at least

fifty feet wide from City Square to Monument Square, "so that the centre of the same shall be in a direct line with the centre of Bunker Hill Monument." This now almost forgotten project was planned in great detail, but a handsome water color picture of the contemplated avenue is all that is left as a token of the earnest efforts made at that time to improve the approach to the battlefield and monument.

This avenue, starting from the central point of the town, was designed to run direct to the monument, a distance of twelve hundred feet, passing slightly to the westward of Winthrop Square, with which it was to be connected by a broad and short cutting, which would widen Winthrop Street at that particular point.

As the petition referred to sets forth, "The three squares — Monument, Winthrop, and City — would thus be united by one beautiful promenade, adorned in process of time with fountains, statues, and magnificent structures ; making a most agreeable resort and contributing to the health, comfort, and intellectual culture of the inhabitants."

At this time Washington Street had not been extended to Haymarket Square, and it was hoped that when this improvement should have been completed a continuous thoroughfare would be developed from the centre of the city of Boston over Warren Bridge and Avenue direct to the monument.

President Warren, in his annual address of 1870, foreshadowed the recent proposal of the Boston Society of Architects for an "Inner Boulevard" encircling the city by suggesting a series of avenues connecting "in one grand boulevard the real Bunker Hill, Winter, Prospect, and Summer Hills, Boston Highlands and Dorchester Heights, the whole circuit of the circumvallation defended by Washington."

Unfortunately this dream of a new avenue was not destined to be fulfilled, for after a hearing continued for several weeks

the measure failed by a single vote, and the plan that was intended to have been a worthy preparation for the great centennial jubilee never came to a realization.

This period seems to have marked a turning point in the fortunes of Charlestown. Many of the old inhabitants, who had built handsome residences on the square and had given to that locality a certain distinction, soon passed away. Others moved to Boston, attracted no doubt by the special advantages offered by the new residential quarters in the Back Bay district. Real estate has suffered greatly by the change. Several of the old houses stand empty to-day. Others have been torn down, and tenements are taking their place. A large and promiscuous population has drifted into the outskirts of the town. High warehouses and elevators obscure the view, and that modern monstrosity, an elevated railroad, has pierced its vitals.

Can nothing be done to save the situation, to give to the old battleground the prominence that is its due, and to restore it to its former dignity?

Undaunted by the fate of the schemes of my predecessors, I shall answer in the affirmative, and I am the more confident in the prospects of the future in that the city government has this time taken the initiative and has placed a new school-house, a dignified building of classic type, upon the square. The thought naturally occurs that this theme of a classic treatment of three sides of the square would give a noble background to the monument. The scheme could gradually be developed until a second "Mars Hill," with its classic buildings, should arise to afford a striking feature in the landscape from many distant points of view. It is here that from time to time public buildings should be erected, designed to harmonize with the one which has already been placed there. Already in the short space of time during which I have been giving this matter thought there have occurred many

FIG. 1.



MONUMENT SQUARE



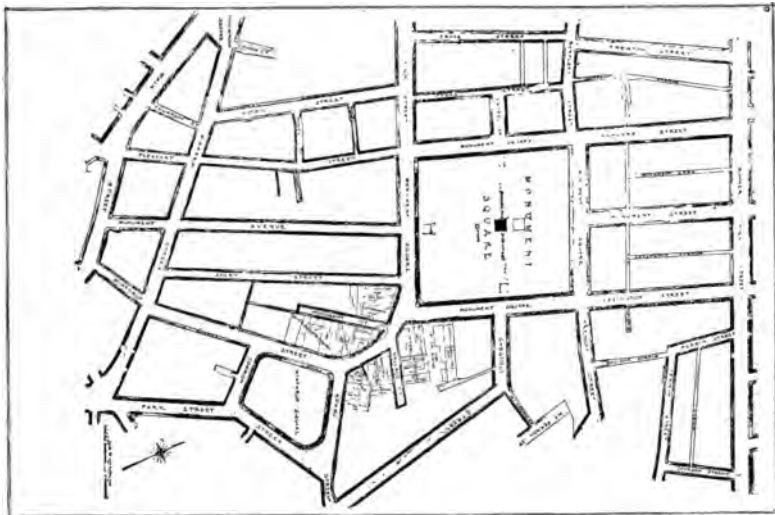
SPRING AVE.  
MOSCOW





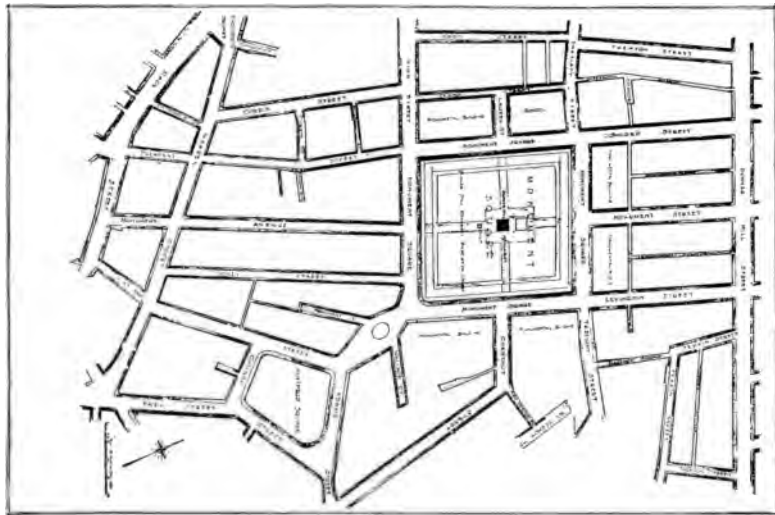


FIG. III.



THE PRESENT APPROACH TO MONUMENT THROUGH PARK STREET, WINTHROP SQUARE, OR TRAINING FIELD AND WINTHROP STREET. (See Fig. II.)

FIG. IV.



PLAN OF NEW APPROACH TO MONUMENT, SHOWING REMOVAL OF BUILDINGS ON WEST SIDE OF WINTHROP STREET.

suggestive possibilities which might lend themselves to this project. The sum of two hundred thousand dollars has recently been set aside for an armory in Charlestown, and I am informed that there is still an unexpended appropriation for a branch library for this district of the city.

Could a more appropriate spot be found for such structures as these? Doubtless, in time, many other buildings of this type could gradually be added until an adequate and impressive setting to the monument had been constructed.

But it is also equally important that something should be done to remedy the difficulty with which every traveller in Charlestown is beset on entering the Bunker Hill district. He has to inquire the way to the monument. It is hardly likely that the ambitious plan of forty years ago could be carried out easily to-day. Conditions have changed since then. City Square has no longer the preponderating importance it had at that time. It has been well-nigh obliterated by the elevated road. It is no longer a fitting point of departure for a noble avenue.

The natural approach of the visitor to the monument to-day is through Winthrop Square which, with the monument grounds, constitute what may be called the modest Park System of the locality. Turning from City Square into Park Street we soon come to Winthrop Square, or the "Training Field," a place of popular resort, where stands the Soldiers' Monument; at the further end are the tablets erected by the city during Mayor Hart's administration, on which are inscribed the names of the men who fell at the Battle of Bunker Hill. These tablets face the direct approach to Monument Square, and from this point an excellent view of the monument might be obtained were it not for the angle formed by the houses on the western side of this street. By the purchase of a small amount of real estate, this approach could be broadened so as to give an artistic view of the obelisk

from Winthrop Square, and to give an appropriate continuity to the Park System. Although this project is not so ambitious as that formerly proposed by President Warren, it would be an admirable substitute—one procured at much less outlay and more adapted to the needs of the present time. The reproach based upon the obscurity of the monument would thus be removed. Let me say here that among the numerous arguments offered at the time the boulevard was proposed, I fail to find what to my mind is the most important of all,—namely, that the vast number of visitors who annually make a pilgrimage to this historical Mecca would receive an impression of the dignity of the monument and its surroundings which could be obtained in no other way. The number of those who yearly visit the grounds can only be roughly estimated. There are, according to the Records of the Association, as many as thirty thousand individuals who ascend the monument, but these are only a small proportion of those who visit the grounds. Boston is becoming every year, as time rolls on, more and more recognized as the historic city of the Union, and it is this among other reasons which is making it the great convention city of this country. It is a moderate statement to claim that from one to two hundred thousand people come thither from all the states of the Union annually to visit the scene of the opening drama of the Revolution. Under the circumstances it is but reasonable and proper for this Association to keep constantly in mind the importance of preserving the old landmarks of this locality on a scale befitting their importance.

Under these circumstances it is also desirable that the grounds themselves should not be allowed to deteriorate, and that from time to time such additions and improvements should be planned as would make them still more interesting to the city's guests.

During the past winter we have had the lodge made water

tight, and the entire interior has been painted in a style more in keeping with the design. The statue of General Warren has been moved back against the wall opposite the entrance, and behind it has been placed a suitable canopy. This arrangement makes the statue visible and gives much more available space in the lodge. Most of the portraits have been removed from the walls, and we do not propose to put many of them back again. Visitors to the monument are more interested to see busts or portraits or some token of those who took part in the battle than photographs or engravings of former presidents of the Association. These latter would better be placed in some room belonging to the Association, and I trust that some day a home may be provided for us which will be an appropriate receptacle for all such mementoes of our predecessors, especially for those who took part in the building of the obelisk. In such a room or building could be deposited the archives of the Association, and if at some future time such a building could be placed on Monument Square and presented to the Association by some generous and patriotic citizens, it would be possible perhaps to co-operate with the citizens of Charlestown in some way in imparting information to the public as to the details of historic events which took place in and about Boston during the Revolution.

It seems to me that the Association and the inhabitants of Charlestown are drifting apart, and that the local celebration is losing too much of its old time flavor. I believe that Charlestown's "17th of June" could be made quite as enjoyable to the citizens of that locality, and far more interesting, if the Association made some effort to interest the people in their work. Lectures on historical subjects could be given from time to time under the auspices of the Association, somewhat after the plan carried out so successfully in the Old South Meeting House.

Our lodge should be reserved for tokens of the battle itself. I think it would be advisable to place in the handsome panels which now line the interior of the lodge bronze tablets containing the names of all the men killed in the battle. Such an attempt has already been made by the city government under the administration of Mayor Hart, as I have already indicated, but I think a careful investigation might result in a considerable revision of the list which, under the seal of the Association, could be made eventually the official mortality list of that day.

I am one of those who believe that a bust or portrait of Lord Howe, of Clinton, and of Pitcairn would add greatly to the interest of the lodge. We need also a few more of the usual mementoes of a battlefield, all of which should be carefully enclosed in cases and artistically arranged about the room. Through the kindness and skill of Col. Horace N. Fisher, we are to obtain relief maps showing the various strategic movements made in course of the fight. Appropriately enlarged and arranged under a glass case, they would furnish a most instructive and easily studied account of the battle.

Finally, I should like to say a word about the grounds. I do not believe it would be wise to propose any radical change. The old hill is still there to speak for itself. The treatment of the lawn surrounding the monument is simple and appropriate. The outline of the redoubt and its relation to the monument is indicated by landmarks placed there by that accurate historian, Richard Frothingham. There are no shrubs or plants to disturb the dignified simplicity of the battlefield. The paths are, however, in need of repair; some of them, notably those at the base of the hill and inside the iron fence, are superfluous as there is a brick sidewalk running parallel and in close proximity with it around the square. The asphalt pavement is badly cracked and crumbled. I

should recommend that the lower path be removed and the asphalt be replaced by grass, grading the slope slightly so that it would lose its present abruptness. The other asphalt walks should be repaired with granolithic pavement. This would enable us to do away with an unsightly temporary fence now placed there to protect the embankment. When we realize what has been done at Gettysburg, at Antietam, at Chickamauga, and many another battlefield of the Civil War, in placing monuments to corps divisions, brigades, and regiments, as well as individuals, and in placing bronze tablets to mark the positions of troops, it does not seem inappropriate that something of the kind should be attempted at Bunker Hill. Where are the memorials of Stark and his men, or of Putnam and those who rallied with him? The beautiful and impressive statue of Prescott is suggestive of what can be done.

Some memorial of the states which fought by the side of Massachusetts on that day would be most acceptable, and I am sure would be forthcoming if so solicited by this Association.

These are some of the thoughts, gentlemen, which have occurred to me during a somewhat careful study of the possessions of our Association during the present year. Doubtless many of them may seem utopian to you. They have this merit,— that they do not involve any immediate or extravagant expenditure of money. They merely point out how the natural growth of the future may be judiciously guided. They are in harmony with the spirit of the time as shown by the interest taken in the recent suggestions of the Boston society of architects for the beautifying of the city. They will have fulfilled their purpose if they help in any way to keep alive the public spirit which animated our founders.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my acknowledgments to Mr. C. A. Coolidge, of the firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, for much valuable advice and for the design for the new treatment of the grounds and the approach to them.

It is my painful duty to refer to the death of two members of our Board of Directors.

Charles Merriam, the senior member on our list of directors, was born October 6, 1832, and died on November 5, 1906, of pneumonia. He joined this Association in 1866.

He began a business career quite early in life, and finally realized a handsome fortune, becoming identified with what was known as the Thayer and the Merriam system of railroad interests.

Unassuming in manner, he was the courteous and polished gentleman. His charitable works were best known to himself, but he was always recognized as one of those who made a prompt and sympathetic response to the many personal appeals with which we are so familiar in our fireside daily reading.

He lived all his married life in Boston and its immediate vicinity as a private citizen, enjoying the esteem and respect of his friends and acquaintances.

He was a type of man whose name we take pride in having upon our list of membership.

George Davis Edmands was born September 15, 1824, and died November 21, 1906. He was of good old Charlestown stock, and the house in which he was born is still standing on Common Street. His father, John Davis Edmands, built the homestead on Austin Street where the family afterwards resided. In his boyhood he attended the famous Training Field School. At the age of twenty-one he was entered as a clerk for Preston & Merrill. In May, 1863, he became a partner, and at the time of his death he was the surviving member of the firm. He was also treasurer of the Boston & Colorado Melting Company, holding that office until 1904. He was a trustee of the Newton Theological Institution, and a director in several business corporations. In spite of the many changes in the population of the Charlestown peninsula,

and his own varied interests, he remained true to the community of his birth. At the time of his death he occupied a fine old mansion overlooking the battleground, where in recent years he watched with interest the local celebration of Charlestown's great holiday, the 17th of June, to which he always gave a friendly support.

His first 17th of June was the day on which the cornerstone of the old monument was laid. They were boys and men together, and may it not be a pleasant fancy to think that the old granite shaft exemplifies in a way the upright and sterling qualities of the man who has gone.







*Copyright, 1908,*  
**BY HORACE N. FISHER.**

## THE OBJECTIVE AT BUNKER HILL.

HORACE N. FISHER,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL  
UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS.

---

GENTLEMEN OF THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION:

NAPOLÉON has described a battle as a dramatic action with its opening, its grand development, and its conclusion.

It is a common error to look only at the grand development and at the status of the two armies at its close, in our estimate of the military importance of a battle, without due regard to its purpose and to the preliminary problems and movements for attaining the "objective" for which the battle was fought. Hence the common mistake of assuming that victory belongs to the army in possession of the battlefield at the close of the fighting ; whereas the true measure is the substantial attainment of the objective for which the battle was fought.

If, then, that objective has not been substantially attained, the possession of the field of battle may technically be a victory with the honors of war, but may well be described as a "barren victory." The great Confederate general, D. H. Hill, one of Lee's famed corps commanders, described the battle of Chickamauga, "The Great Battle of the West . . . that barren victory which broke the back of the Southern Confederacy"; and General Longstreet, who commanded the Confederate left wing in that battle, wrote

thus to the Union commander General Rosecrans: "The objective of that battle was the possession of Chattanooga; we tried our utmost to regain it; you kept it, and I do not see why the victory was not yours." Such were the views of great generals, written after the partisan feelings of our Civil War had been mellowed by time.

It is, therefore, befitting this anniversary of the great historic event, which united the Thirteen Colonies in armed resistance and assured our national independence, to consider this battle in a broad and generous spirit, free from prejudice and bitterness, recognizing the gallantry and military skill of the British commanders and the credit fairly due to our commanders.

It is now proposed to study this battle as a military problem, as nearly as may be, as it presented itself to the military officers who planned the movements of the contending forces in the campaign culminating in the battle; keeping clearly in mind that every battle should have a definite objective, controlled always by the campaign objective; that a battle fought without a definite objective is a criminal waste of life. It is also proper to recall Napoleon's maxim that there should be but one general battle in a campaign, and that it should be fought to a finish, in attempting to grasp the campaign objective—that halfway measures lose everything in war.

It goes without saying that the British campaign objective was to raise the blockade of Boston, immediately following the retreat of the British force from Lexington; that the American campaign objective was to compel the evacuation of Boston by the British army; and that the movements of the opposing armies were based upon their respective campaign objectives:—we will consider them in turn after a brief examination of the military topography of the seat of war.

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## MILITARY TOPOGRAPHY OF BOSTON ON JUNE 17, 1775.

The town of Boston occupied the eastern half of a peninsula two miles long from north to south, with an average width of one mile. In 1775 there were three conspicuous hills on this peninsula: Beacon Hill in the centre of the western half, 150 feet high; Copp's Hill at the northeastern point, opposite Charlestown, 54 feet high; Fort Hill at the southeastern point, commanding the ship anchorage of the inner harbor, 40 feet high; the last two hills rising abruptly from the sea three-fourths of a mile from the dominating steep, Beacon Hill.

The peninsula of Boston in 1775, before the hills had been partly levelled to fill the marshes and tidal flats, was entirely surrounded by water except at the "neck" or isthmus connecting it with the town of Roxbury, three miles and a half distant to the south on the mainland. The quaint description of this "neck," given in 1710 by a traveller, held good in 1775:

"The Neck of Land betwixt the Town and Country is  
"about 40 yards broad and so low that the Spring tides  
"sometimes wash the Road; which might be made so  
"strong as not to be forced, there being no way of  
"coming at it by land except over that Neck.

The main road from Copp's Hill, bisecting the peninsula from north to south, crossed the neck by a causeway built in the early settlement of the town. At the narrowest part a high stockade was built to protect the settlement from incursions of wolves and Indian marauders; in this stockade was a gateway which was closed at night and always guarded by armed guards. Later the stockade was replaced by a masonry fortification which General Gage, in September, 1774, in view of probable hostilities, strengthened and protected with

a broad ditch in front, through which the tide flowed. The name "Castle Street" commemorates the locality of this line of fortifications, called by our Revolutionary forefathers "The Ministerial Citadel." It consisted of two bastions connected by curtains, and was armed with fifteen field-guns.

During the ten months following, the "Advanced Lines" were built six hundred yards in advance of the Citadel towards Roxbury; they were of the most formidable character, as appears from an admirable, detailed map dated July 31, 1775, which made the "neck" impregnable to attack from Roxbury, unless by regular siege approaches with skilful engineers and siege artillery.

The "Plan of Gage's Fortifications on Boston Neck, July 31, 1775" — No. 58 in the Bostonian Society Collection of Maps — is admirable as an example of military engineering. However it came into Washington's hands, it demonstrated to him that the fortifications on the Neck were very skilfully made and could not be carried by frontal attack without regular siege works, but that the Advanced Lines might be enfiladed from the rear by sufficient batteries on Nook Hill, half a mile distant on Dorchester peninsula, from the opposite shore of the South Bay. We do, however, know that Capt. John Trumbull of Spencer's Connecticut regiment at Roxbury, upon hearing that Washington was very anxious to obtain a plan of the Neck fortifications, which he had daily reconnoitred from our Roxbury Lines, crept near enough to make a drawing of them, which was so satisfactory that Washington appointed him aide-de-camp on his personal staff.

An examination of the fortifications, as indicated on the plan of July 31, 1775, known to have been in Washington's possession, may explain why he never attempted to attack them in front and why his fortification of Dorchester Height March, 1776, was a prelude to the fortification of Nook Hill

which would enfilade the Advanced Lines on Boston Neck and render them untenable, thus compelling the evacuation or capitulation of Boston.

The Advanced Lines on Boston Neck were built across the Neck from the Back Bay (the tidal estuary between Boston and Cambridge more than a mile wide, forming the mouth of Charles River) to the South Bay (another tidal estuary between Boston and Dorchester Neck, less than half a mile wide between Nook Hill and the Advanced Lines). These Lines consisted of a regular fortified front of 750 yards with two bastions and a broad dry ditch crossed by a draw-bridge; its armament in July, 1775, was eight 24-pounder siege-guns, six 8-inch howitzers, one 13-inch mortar, and twelve field-guns, with an ample supply of shot and shell for, at least, an all-day engagement. These works were open at the rear to the guns of the Citadel, 600 yards distant, and to the guns of the "Block House Battery," 400 yards behind its left. Between the Block House and the Advanced Lines was open ground, ample for infantry supports and as a place d'armes for the movement of troops for defending the Lines, or for sallying outside of them as occasion required.

While practically impregnable in front, the Advanced Lines could be enfiladed (as already stated) from Nook Hill on Dorchester Neck, which was opposite the midway between the Lines and the Citadel. This hill was some thirty feet higher than the rise of ground on which the Lines were built; its distance from the gateway through the Lines less than 1000 yards; but until Knox brought the siege-guns from Ticonderoga on sleds in the winter of 1775-76 it would have been folly for Washington to occupy that hill. The position of Nook Hill could not be attacked from the sea because of the broad reach of Dorchester Flats, exposed at lowtide and barely awash at hightide; it could, however, be attacked in boats from the South Battery (Fort Hill) in Boston, landing



at the point directly under Nook Hill, where the charts of that date show a snug little *nook* of water, the only place where boats could land on the north side of the peninsula, and from which a road led to Nook Hill across the marshes to Dorchester Meeting House and to Roxbury. It was here that Clinton with his division was to land at daybreak on the 18th of June, while Howe was to land with his division at Dorchester Point at the eastern end of the Dorchester peninsula, opposite Castle William garrisoned by the 64th Regiment and some companies of artillery; and Burgoyne was to cannonade the Roxbury Lines from the Neck and to sweep with his guns the road across the marshes of Dorchester Neck, by which alone Nook Hill could be reached by land; these marshes were a mile wide and overflowed at high tide. It is easy to understand, from this description, the grounds upon which Burgoyne, in his letter of June 25, 1775, to Lord Stanley, expressed his opinion that "the operation must have been very easy. This was to have been executed on the 18th."

It was to cover this approach across the marshes to Nook Hill and to insure thereby the Advanced Lines from being enfiladed that the Block House Battery was built, midway between those Lines and the Citadel; it was an enclosed work facing Nook Hill and the road across the marshes; it was armed with eight 24-pounder siege-guns, all in embrasures on that one front of 100 yards. The American occupation of Dorchester Heights, on March 5th, towards the eastern end of the peninsula, endangered the British sea communications; but the occupation of Nook Hill in force on the night of March 15th compelled the immediate evacuation of Boston by turning the only bulwark of the British land defences.

With this review of the strength and weakness of the British land defences on Boston Neck we cannot do better

than to use the classic description of the military topography of Boston in General Burgoyne's letter of June 25, 1775, to Lord Stanley.

[*Extract*]

“ Boston is a peninsula joined to the mainland by a narrow neck. . . . Arms of the sea and harbor surround the rest on the other sides. On one of these arms, to the North, is Charlestown, and over it a large hill; which, like Boston, is also a peninsula. To the South of the Town is a still larger scope of ground containing three hills, joining also to the main by a tongue of land; which is called Dorchester Neck. The heights above described, both North and South, command the Town: it was absolutely necessary that we should make ourselves masters of these Heights. . . . Everything was accordingly arranged. My two colleagues and I (who have never differed one jot in military sentiment) had, in concert with General Gage, formed the plan: — Howe was to land on the “ Point ” [*i.e.* Dorchester Point], Clinton on the Centre [*i.e.* at Nook Hill] and I was to cannonade from the Causeway on the Neck [*i.e.* Boston Neck, from which the Block House Battery of eight 24-pounders swept the Dorchester marshes, to prevent reinforcements being sent from Roxbury]; each to take advantage of circumstances. The operation must have been very easy. This was to have been executed on the 18th.

“ On the 17th, at dawn of day, we found that the enemy had pushed intrenchments with great diligence during the night on the Heights of Charlestown, and we evidently saw that every hour gave them fresh strength [*i.e.* reinforcements]; it therefore became necessary to alter our plan and attack on that side.”

We have, as it were, now entered the British headquarters in Boston and have heard the plan arranged at the Council of War of June 12th, for raising the blockade of Boston, as stated by one of the three major-generals, selected because

of their proven military skill as being the best qualified in the British army for this important operation. Their plan was to take and hold both Dorchester Neck and Charlestown, beginning with Dorchester Neck on the 18th, and afterwards to take possession of Charlestown. But, as Burgoyne says, the action of the Americans in intrenching on Breed's Hill in Charlestown on the night of June 16th compelled the British generals to alter their plan and attack Charlestown on June 17th, postponing the movement to take possession of Dorchester to a favorable opportunity later — which, however, never came, as the whole world knows. This letter has been published; but there are unpublished letters from General Howe, preserved in the Earl of Dartmouth's collection of manuscripts, which explain the masterly plan of the three brilliant British major-generals, who, according to General Burgoyne, were unanimous in preparing this plan. Fortunately we are able in this paper to publish for the first time these important letters; and when we read General Howe's letter of June 12th to his brother Lord Howe, we have outlined, before our eyes, the plan of campaign for attaining the campaign objective. Further, we can readily picture the astonishment of General Ward and his generals when they learned the boldness and scope of this plan to raise the siege of Boston and crush the military forces of the Provincials at one and the same blow, which was to be struck within a few hours — on the 18th of June — and it was now the 16th! Immediate action must be taken to divert the movement against Dorchester Heights; for the importance of our taking it had been recognized as the essential factor for compelling the British evacuation of Boston. It would be folly to attempt its possession until the siege-guns should arrive from Ticonderoga, with which to cut off the British line of communication by sea; it would, on the other hand, be rash to provoke a general

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engagement with an army of veteran troops, led by the ablest generals of the British army, while our army was hardly organized, and with less than half a day's battle-supply of powder.

These were indeed mighty problems, almost insuperable objections to a general engagement; but the certainty of the overwhelming danger that confronted the Provincial generals within a few hours nerved them to action even bolder, more audacious and far-seeing, in spite of its apparent rashness, than the bold and master plan of the British major-generals. To these objections Putnam answered: "We will risk only 2000 men and, if driven to retreat, every stone wall shall be lined with their dead." This was the plan adopted to divert the British from the execution of their purpose to take possession of Dorchester peninsula on June 18th and thus secure their only line of supplies and reinforcements from England, — the absolute control of the ship channel and inner harbor, which would enable the British to continue the occupation of Boston indefinitely, as every man then at Ward's headquarters realized. Then the fearless Dr. Joseph Warren, president of the Provincial Congress and chairman of the Committee of Safety, the newly elected major-general of Massachusetts, waiving aside the caution he had urged as inopportune at such a tremendous crisis demanding instant action, as gallantly answered back: "Almost thou persuadest me! Still I think the project rash. But if you execute it, you will not be surprised to find me at your side." The brave man who did not fear to commemorate the dead of the Boston Massacre in the Old South Church of Boston, packed with British officers to overawe the orator; the man — who had taken the greatest risks in leading our minute-men in turning the proud outward march of the British Regulars into a running race home from Lexington on the 19th of April — was not a man to hesitate from personal fear to face them again by

the side of Putnam at Charlestown on the 17th of June. He may have thought the project rash, but he also realized its necessity.

In a word, the occupation of Charlestown, the intrenchment of Breed's Hill so close to the inner harbor, was intended to provoke its instant attack in force by the British the next day; it was not intended to hold Charlestown, for Prescott's men took only one day's rations and no blankets; and the reinforcements sent during the battle took neither rations nor blankets; the artillery sent with Prescott was two 3-pounder iron guns, absolutely harmless to the enemy's shipping; the next day two other similar guns and two brass 6-pounder field-guns — the largest at the Cambridge camp — were sent to Charlestown during the battle. This fact alone is conclusive that no permanent occupation of the intrenchments on Charlestown Hill was contemplated. The real purpose was embodied in Putnam's words "We will risk only 2000 men" and cripple the British all we can before retreating; hoping thereby to disable them to such an extent that they would not have men enough, after fortifying and garrisoning Charlestown, to attempt to take and hold Dorchester Neck or to seriously menace the Centre at Cambridge. This seems to have been the plan of the American generals at Cambridge in provoking the battle of Bunker Hill, — the battle objective as an incident merely of the campaign objective, which was to compel the British to evacuate Boston. But even the most daringly optimistic in the Council of War could hardly have expected to inflict a loss of over forty per cent of an attacking force of 2500 Regulars representing a quarter of the British field force in Boston. From that day on, the British did not seriously attempt the occupation of Dorchester peninsula, until driven to desperation by our occupation of Dorchester Heights in March they determined to risk all in attacking; but thanks to a violent storm making it

impossible to land, they escaped another Bunker Hill without half as many chances of victory as they had at Charlestown.

#### GENERAL HOWE'S PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN

Perhaps it would be more exact to style it the "Plan of the Three Major-generals," as from Burgoyne's letter to Lord Stanley above quoted it seems to have been unanimously adopted by all three on June 12th.

Generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne were accounted the ablest general officers of the British army. They had achieved high honors under the eye of the famous Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, the victor at "Minden"; they were famed for brilliant courage and dash, as well as for their mastery of the higher branches of military science,—grand tactics and strategy. For these reasons King George III selected them to go to America—nominally to assist General Gage, with whom the king was disappointed because he had failed to accomplish what was expected of him; really to put energy and dash into military operations and bring Massachusetts and especially Boston to their knees. Whatever may have been the king's prejudices and narrow-mindedness in political matters, he always looked closely into all high military appointments which involved grave military responsibilities; and the appointment of these three generals was not an act of favoritism.

The "Three Major-generals," as they were called, arrived at Boston on May 25th. In addition to the strong force Gage already had in Boston there were two brigades under orders for America and the 17th Light Dragoons; the first brigade and the dragoons arrived at Boston, some on the eve of the battle, others during the week previous, the second brigade early in July. According to General Burgoyne, he and his two colleagues were unanimous for "pressing vigorous undertakings, but recognized that the reasons for waiting to the last

moment for the expected reinforcements, which were known to be near, were justly founded. . . . The troops of the first embarkation happily arrived at this juncture and the effect on the spirits of the army was visible." To understand the full significance of this last sentence and its probable bearing upon the plan of the battle of June 17th, we should refer to the earlier portion of this letter of Burgoyne to Lord Rochford written immediately after the battle, in which he paints a vivid picture of the demoralization of the army in Boston. Burgoyne writes thus:

"I arrived at Boston, together with Generals Howe and Clinton, on the 25th May. It would be unnecessary, were it possible, to describe our surprize or other feelings upon the appearances, which at once and on every side were offered to our observation. The Town, on the land side, invested by a rabble in arms, who flushed with success and insolence had advanced to pistol-shot of our out-guards; the ships in the harbor exposed to and expecting a cannonade or bombardment: — in all companies, whether of officers or inhabitants, men still lost in a sort of stupefaction, which the events of the 19th of April had occasioned, and venting expressions of censure, anger, or despondency."

It would be difficult to imagine a more complete degree of demoralization of a veteran army, sent to repress a town with an unarmed male population within the military age no more numerous than themselves.

Then, after depicting "the unfortunate situation to which things were then reduced, I do not know that they [*i.e.* the troops] could have prevented these insults. At last, the enemy advanced works upon the height [*i.e.* Charlestown Heights] which commands the Town and Harbor; and there seemed to want only the opening of batteries to produce a more singular and shameful event than can be found in the history of the World — a paltry skirmish (for the affair of the 19th of April

was no more) inducing circumstances as rapid and as decisive as the Battle of Pharsalia ; and the colors of a fleet and army of Great Britain, not wrested from us, but without a conflict kicked out of America."

This spirit of disgust permeated the army in Boston and was not to be changed for the better without a supreme test of manhood in battle.

In his recent and admirably fair "History of the American Revolution" (I. 324), Sir George O. Trevelyan ascribes the plan of attack largely to this sentiment:

"To win without fighting had no attraction for men who  
"on the last occasion [*i.e.* Lexington] had fought without  
"winning. Our troops were eager to try conclusions at  
"the earliest possible moment and under difficulties which  
"would enable them to show their mettle; as soon as it  
"was known that there were fortifications to attack, the  
"resolution to approach them in front was automatic and  
"all but unanimous."

This seems an accurate description of the eagerness of the army in Boston to wipe away the disgrace to their flag in their disorderly retreat from Lexington before a swarm of minute-men in shirt-sleeves. Certainly this "retrieving their good name" was very marked in Burgoyne's mind. In one letter he writes of the battle of Bunker Hill: "The day ended with glory and the success was most important, considering the ascendancy it gave the Regular Troops." To another correspondent in London he writes more explicitly: "I now congratulate you, my dear Lord, upon an event that effaces the stain of the 19th of April and will, I hope, stand a testimony and a record in America of a superiority of Regular Troops over those of any other description." And yet he bears noble testimony to the bravery and military skill manifested by the Provincial Troops in the defence of their position and in covering their retreat. Nay, he even goes so far as tacitly to



admit much more,—that “the men in *all* the corps, having twice felt their enemy to be more formidable than they expected, it will require some training under such generals as Howe and Clinton before they can prudently be intrusted in many exploits against such odds as the conduct and spirit of the leaders enabled them in this instance to overcome.”

The letters of General Howe of June 12th to his brother Lord Howe and to General Hervey, Military Secretary at the Horse Guards [*i.e.* army headquarters], are invaluable as historical evidence of the plan decided upon at the British Council of War in Boston of that date. Each of these letters unfolds the plan of operations for raising the blockade of Boston in much the same words, though naturally in other parts they may discuss different questions. These letters are preserved in the manuscript collection of papers belonging to Lord Dartmouth (whose grandfather was British Secretary of War in 1774–75), by whose courtesy copies were obtained in 1905. The following extract of the letter of June 12, 1775, from General Howe to Lord Howe states this plan in these words:

[*Extract*]

“ My ideas of the measures we may be able to take in our present situation are:—First, to possess Dorchester-neck by two redoubts; and from thence, *if found practicable* without much risk, to attack the post at Roxbury, from that neck as well as from the Town Neck; to entrench a couple of hundred men there, which would—I imagine—effectually secure the Town from surprise on that side. I would then go over, with all we can muster, to Charlestown Height, which is entirely commanded from Boston as I said before; and either attack the Rebels at Cambridge, or perhaps, if the country admits it, endeavor to turn that post,—which, judging by appearances from the heights round this Town, seems most advisable. In either case, I suppose the Rebels will move from Cambridge, and

“that we shall take and keep possession of it. But I  
“much doubt whether we shall be able to pass farther into  
“the country before the arrival of the Last Division of  
“the four Battalions from Ireland.”

We have, in this terse, soldierly outline of the plan of operations adopted on June 12th, not only a plan of campaign objective, but a plan of operations immediately after gaining possession of Charlestown. We now understand why the “General Morning Orders, Saturday, June 17, 1775” provided that the troops were to parade “with their arms, ammunition, blankets, and the provisions ordered to be booked this morning”; that points of embarkation are designated for certain corps, which formed Howe’s division; that half of Clinton’s division were ordered to the “North Battery after the rest are embarked, and be ready to embark there when ordered. The rest of the Troops will be kept in readiness to march at a moment’s warning.”

These provisions indicate an intention to go beyond Charlestown, for the men had three days’ rations in their haversacks; that they were to be out one or more nights, because blankets were ordered in sweltering midsummer weather; that they did not expect to return for some time to their camps, because a subaltern and twenty-three enlisted men were “to be left by each corps for the security of their respective encampments.”

With General Howe’s letter giving the plan of operations *after* taking possession of Charlestown, we can have no doubt that he intended to march “with all we can muster . . . and either attack the Rebels at Cambridge, or perhaps, if the country admits it, endeavor to turn that post.”

Even without Howe’s letter the provisions in general orders for the troops to carry blankets and rations for several days is conclusive of Howe’s expectation to be absent for a number of days; but his letter makes clear that Howe expected to sleep

at Cambridge, after dealing with the Provincial detachment that had dared to intrench at Charlestown.

In this connection it may be recalled that the armed transport "Symetry" was sent, with some "600 marines" on board, to a position between Charlestown and Lechmere's Point, near the mouth of Willis Creek, which separates Lechmere's Point from Cobble Hill, as will be seen by the accompanying map; and near the "Symetry" were two "gondolas" — large flat-boats with planked-up sides, each with a 12-pounder gun; these flat-boats were used for landing troops and for covering such landings. Captain Barker's diary (date of June 19th) complains that they ought to have been sent up the Mystic to cover the British Right at the time of the attack on the Rail Fence Line, "where they could have been of great use. . . . Instead of that they were on the other side and of no manner of use." But we know that the third gondola, called the "Spitfire," was used in covering the landing of Howe's division on Moulton's Point, and that service seems to have been especially assigned to the gondolas close by the "Symetry" and her 600 marines.

Indeed the fact that this light-draft transport (armed with 9-pounder guns) and two flat-boats especially used in landing troops had been sent near the mouth of Willis Creek early in the day seems to indicate the intention to land those troops near the mouth of Willis Creek later on, when the time should be deemed opportune. Apparently these troops were the 47th Regiment and the 1st Battalion of Marines, belonging to Clinton's division, which had been ordered to the North Battery "ready to embark there when ordered." On Page's (official) map of the battle we find the place of their landing at Charlestown marked "Landing of the Reinforcement," and the line of their advance on the south slope of Breed's Hill against the southern face of the Redoubt, which would seem conclusive that these two battalions

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were not engaged in the second (or general) attack along the whole line, ordered after the first attack on the American extreme left, or Rail Fence Line. But this presumption is confirmed by this explanatory note on Page's map: "The 47th Regiment and Battalion of Marines disembarked near the right of Charlestown, after it had been evacuated, and assisted in the reduction of the Redoubt." Apparently these two battalions, which Howe's letter states to have been some 650 rank and file, were the "600 marines" on the "Symetry" transport off Willis Creek early in the afternoon, ready to land when ordered; that, when Charlestown was set on fire to compel the Americans firing hotly from the houses on Pigot's left to evacuate the town and thus enable Pigot to take part in the second or general attack, these two battalions of Clinton's division on the "Symetry" were recalled and landed near the town "*after it was evacuated*," in time to take part in the third attack under Clinton's leadership. Burgoyne's letter to Lord Stanley covers this point: "Howe's left was staggered; two battalions had been sent to reinforce them, but we perceive them on the beach seeming embarrassed what way to march. Clinton then, next for business, took the part without waiting for orders and threw himself into a boat to head them: he arrived in time to be of service." The fact that these two battalions were on the beach without orders where to go indicates that they arrived after Howe's Left under Pigot had been repulsed in the second (or general) attack.

We fortunately have additional evidence, that of Dr. John Jeffries, who was with General Clinton on Copp's Hill at that moment. He told his son, Dr. John Jeffries, Jr., who carefully wrote out his description (published in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of June 17, 1875) of what he saw and what Clinton did: "The second attack being attended with similar results, General Clinton determined to go over immediately himself, which he did, taking my father with him."

Remember we are critically studying this battle and it is important to fix the time of the arrival of the 47th Regiment and 1st Marines; namely, *after* the repulse of the general attack, which was delayed until the town was set on fire to drive the Americans from the houses, used by them as a cover in harassing Pigot's left; and we have shown that these two battalions did not land until after the town was evacuated — probably not earlier than 4.30 P.M. This would allow ample time for these two battalions to have occupied their threatening position off the mouth of Willis Creek for a couple of hours, ready to land and co-operate with Howe's force, which was intended to cross Charlestown Neck, as soon as the Americans were driven out of Charlestown peninsula, and attack the American Centre at Cambridge. This was believed by the American general — and with Howe's letter now in hand, correctly believed — to be the real objective of the British, and that the landing of Howe's division at Charlestown was intended to induce General Ward to weaken his force at Cambridge by hurrying forward a large reinforcement to Charlestown as soon as it became known that the British had landed there in force.

It is also said that Clinton and several other generals were decidedly in favor of making the main attack by the Willis Creek line upon Cambridge, sending a sufficient force to close Charlestown Neck and thus shutting up the Provincial Troops within the peninsula; but for some reason, which has already been indicated as the probable one, it was decided to make the main attack at Charlestown with an irresistible force, capture or disperse the Americans there, and then proceed towards Cambridge; that half of Clinton's division, already off Willis Creek, should then be landed to co-operate with Howe, and the rest of the Field Force in Boston, "kept in readiness to march at a moment's warning," be sent in boats to reinforce them.

The whole movement was brilliantly planned ; there seemed every reason to expect its complete success,—that the American army would be defeated or dispersed by sunset of June 17th and the Siege of Boston raised. Everything depended on Howe's prompt success at Charlestown ; this was why he made such heroic efforts to win the victory there at all hazards, after repeated repulses. When he won it at last, he could not move another step ahead because of enormous losses.

#### THE AMERICAN OBJECTIVE AND PLAN.

While the British campaign objective was to raise the Siege of Boston, and all operations in the field were to that end, the American objective was to prevent the raising of the Siege, and all their operations in the field, or within their lines, were to be made in view of and subordinate to that supreme end.

It was not, therefore, contemplated to offer or to accept battle unless forced to do so in order to make the investment, the blockade, of Boston more effective and more harassing to the British ; for this reason the principal operations in the field, undertaken by the American generals previous to the battle of Bunker Hill, had been to strip the islands and the shores of Boston Harbor of cattle and sheep and of hay, large quantities of which were kept there. The result of these successful forays reduced the garrison to the greatest straits for fresh meat and for forage for their horses.

This was unquestionably the wisest course the American generals could adopt while they were organizing the patriotic minute-men into regiments, enlisted for a fixed term of service ; for the companies of minute-men were strictly volunteers, free to go home as soon as the emergency—the “alarm”—had passed. The brigade organization did not

exist and even the regimental organization was still imperfect in June. The regimental skeleton, the military framework, had been shaped; its component units were still but little more than company organizations, composed of men well drilled in organized militia companies; they were accustomed to act together and efficiently as independent companies, but had yet to learn the increased effectiveness and combined strength of regimental manœuvres; nevertheless, for defending an intrenched position, where regimental manœuvres are not of much value, the company organization sufficed. The battle of Bunker Hill may be not inappropriately described as a battle carried on by independent companies defending intrenched lines against Regular Troops. Our generals, Putnam in particular, recognized their excellence in this role. This was Putnam's conclusive argument, at the American Council of War: "The Americans are not afraid of their heads, though they are very much afraid of their legs. If you cover these, they will fight forever." He was well qualified to judge of their fighting ability behind cover: he had seen how Dieskau and his veteran French Regulars had been routed by raw Provincial troops behind breastworks, under General Johnson, at the battle of Lake George. And we know how, forty years later, 14,000 of Wellington's veterans were signally defeated in a frontal attack upon Jackson's 8000 frontiersmen at New Orleans behind a breastwork so trifling that a British officer declared he could leap over it easily on horseback. Thus, though the Redoubt in "Breed's Pasture" was but a feeble defence thrown up after midnight of June 16th, and the Breastwork made of two rows of sods four feet apart, filled in with new-mown hay well trampled down, as we know from a paper (in possession of H.W. Kimball, Esq., of Boston) written by Francis Burnham of Little's regiment; though the "rail fence" was merely a pasture fence through which fence-rails had been thrust and covered with

loose new-mown hay, these improvised works had proved a barrier before which the famed British Regulars were twice repulsed with losses rarely suffered in the history of war. To their credit and splendid discipline be it said that they retained their organization, though forty per cent of the enlisted men and sixty per cent of their officers fell that day, and that they rallied for a third attack and carried the Redoubt and Breast-work at the point of the bayonet. It may also be said of General Howe that he never flinched under that terrible musketry, which cut down every man of his twelve staff officers; and of General Clinton that, when from Copp's Hill Battery "he saw two regiments standing about in confusion on the opposite beach, he threw himself into a boat, crossed over as a volunteer, revived their courage, rearranged their ranks, and placed himself far enough in their front for every man to see how an old aide-de-camp of the fighting Prince of Brunswick stepped up a Glacis." (Trevelyan's "American Revolution," I. 331.) Whatever else may be said, never did men of the English race, on either side, fight more gallantly! Prescott and Bridge coolly parrying with their swords the British bayonets as they led their men from the Redoubt; Putnam, Stark, and Knowlton, after twice repulsing attacks on the Rail Fence Line, coolly covering Prescott's retreat; Warren refusing to surrender and laying down his life outside of the Redoubt—rivalled Howe and Clinton on that field of honor and glory.

As already stated, the American Council of War at Cambridge recognized that the proposed occupation of Dorchester peninsula, set for June 18th, would be fatal to our campaign objective,—to compel the evacuation of Boston,—and that immediate action was imperative to divert the British from that important movement; that to take such a close and threatening position on the opposite side of Boston as would not fail to provoke instant attack by the British seemed



the only practical method of diverting them from Dorchester peninsula; that in view of this overwhelming danger that confronted them, Putnam's urgent plan was adopted; namely, "We will risk only 2000 men and, if driven to retreat, every stone wall shall be lined with their dead." It was, then and there, deliberately and after fully weighing the reasons for and against this audacious plan, that the fateful decision was reached; for if the British should win Charlestown after suffering losses sufficient to seriously cripple their forces available for field — that is, offensive — operations, they would be unable to occupy Dorchester, and moreover, they would naturally feel obliged to fortify and garrison Charlestown, which would still further deplete their field force. These considerations were too obvious to have been overlooked.

From various sources it has been known that secret information did reach American headquarters that the British intended to seize one or both of the peninsulas of Charlestown and Dorchester. Accounts vary as to the extent of this secret information and how it was obtained. These accounts seem to agree that it was brought by a man who went by night in a canoe and returned on the morning of either the 15th or 16th of June; none of the accounts state who he was. But since the publication of the memorandum made by Dr. John Jeffries, 2d, of what his father, the Dr. John Jeffries of the Revolutionary time, stated to him of the battle and his accompanying General Clinton to the battlefield, we may not unreasonably believe that General Warren himself obtained the information of the decision of the British Council of War of June 12th, to occupy Dorchester peninsula on June 18th; and that he deemed it entirely trustworthy.

*[Extract from the Jeffries Memorandum]*

"Doctor Warren had sent to my father a message to  
"meet him secretly at midnight at the end of the wharf

“of the Charlestown Ferry. He accordingly met him  
“shortly before the Battle of Bunker Hill. Dr. Warren  
“came over in a small boat with muffled oars. His  
“object was to induce my father to unite with the con-  
“tinental army as a surgeon: this he urged upon him,  
“offering him great inducements to accept. . . . ‘We want  
“you to be at the head of the medical service.’ The  
“offer, however, was declined.”

[This memorandum may be found, published in full, in *Proceedings of Bunker Hill Monument Association for 1906*. While interesting as to General Clinton, it is not germane to the present subject to quote more of it.]

There is another much earlier, and therefore independent, account in a little book in the Boston Public Library [4409 a. 40], published 1835 by Mrs. J. B. Brown, “Stories about General Warren,” etc.; and, if I mistake not, the author by kinship or otherwise had peculiar facilities to know about them. The following extract from that book (p. 78) elucidates somewhat the purpose of General Warren’s canoe trip to Boston.

[*Extract from Mrs. Brown’s Book*]

“Dr. Jeffries . . . told General Howe [on the battlefield  
“June 17th] that General Warren had only five days  
“previous, with his accustomed fearlessness of danger,  
“ventured in a small canoe to Boston, that he might  
“himself gather information of the designs of the enemy;  
“that he had at the same time urged him [Dr. Jeffries]  
“to return with him and act as surgeon of the Americans.”

Whatever the source, however full, this secret information may have been, it seems unquestionable that there was information believed to be entirely trustworthy laid before the Council of War on the morning of June 16th which decided the American generals to take the audacious — under ordinary circumstances, the rash — step of intrenching in Charlestown that very night to provoke a British attack.

The Massachusetts Provincial Congress, in their official report of the battle of Bunker Hill to the Continental Con-

gress, dated June 20, 1775, states the reasons which led the Americans to fortify Breed's Hill; viz.:

“ Having good intelligence that General Gage was about  
“ to take possession of advantageous posts in Charlestown  
“ and on Dorchester Point, the Committee of Safety  
“ advised that our troops should prepossess them if  
“ possible.” (American Archives, II. 1040.)

But we have a more definite statement of the exact purpose of the British, as made known to General Ward, from statements of Samuel Adams to his favorite nephew Hon. Joseph Allen. This is of such extreme importance that we should know just who Joseph Allen was and his relations with Samuel Adams; for Adams was just the man to know from General Ward the exact measure and quality of the information he acted on.

In the life of Samuel Adams by H. V. Wells (I. 342), we read that

“ A special favorite of Mr. Adams was his nephew, Joseph  
“ Allen, who was a frequent visitor at his house, and used,  
“ in after years, to remember the unwearied industry of  
“ his uncle. . . . They often had for visitors the sister  
“ of Samuel Adams (Mary, wife of James Allen) and her  
“ children, who usually came from a neighboring town and  
“ passed a certain season in Boston — Mrs. Adams and  
“ Miss Adams returning the visit in the summer months.  
“ . . . In her will Mrs. Adams gives Joseph Allen Esq'  
“ and Samuel Allen, both of Worcester, ten dollars each  
“ for a ring of Mr. Adams' and my hair.” (II. 19.)

This indicates the close intimacy of Joseph Allen with his uncle from his childhood until his uncle's death. It was even more, an affectionate interest; for when Joseph Allen (born 1749, died 1827) removed to Leicester to engage in business, his uncle wrote him a most affectionate letter such as a father might write to a son commencing an active life away from home, in which he addressed him as his “ Dear Kinsman ” and

invoked God's blessing. (Wells's "Life of Samuel Adams," I. 342.) So much for the warm personal intimacy between Joseph Allen and Samuel Adams. That Joseph Allen's character and standing as a known man were of the highest type, making his account of his uncle's sayings on public matters entirely trustworthy, his public record is conclusive. Before he left Boston for Leicester in 1771, he was an ardent supporter of his uncle's political views and a "Son of Liberty." Removing to Worcester in 1776, he was elected clerk of the courts for Worcester County at the age of twenty-seven; and he filled that responsible office continuously from 1776 to 1810. In 1778 he was a member of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention, and from 1811 to 1813 a member of Congress. Thus his high character and his close intimacy with his great uncle assures us of his correct version of Samuel Adams's statement of General Ward's information, in accordance with which the American troops were successively moved from time to time during the battle. Now we will take Mr. Joseph Allen's account of what Samuel Adams said :

"I have heard some people find fault with General Ward  
"for intrenching on Breed's Hill, so near the enemy,  
"without any fortifications in their rear. But the world  
"does not know how much that man is to be justified for  
"so doing; for he had secret intelligence from Boston, by  
"means of spies, that the British were about to take  
"possession of Dorchester Heights; and, to divert them  
"from their object, a close approach 'of' the enemy was  
"made by intrenching on Breed's Hill, which had the  
"desired effect until the Provincials could take possession  
"of Dorchester Heights." (Swett's "History of Bunker  
Hill," 32.)

We thus, as it were, are brought into the Council of War at General Ward's headquarters on June 16, 1775, and hear the reason why Prescott was sent to Charlestown that night:

that he was sent to throw up intrenchments at such point in Charlestown as he would be informed of by the proper officers when he arrived at Charlestown Neck. We know that Colonel Prescott with his own regiment and detachments of Bridge's and Frye's regiments all three Massachusetts regiments, encamped within the "Cambridge Lines," formed on Cambridge Common at 9 o'clock that evening and after a prayer and benediction by President Langdon of Harvard College marched forth in the darkness on the main road to Charlestown Neck; that on crossing the bridge over Willis Creek and reaching Fort No. 3 near the "Red House" at the crossroads beyond the bridge, they found not only Patterson's Massachusetts regiment drawn up under arms along the side of the road, but another Massachusetts regiment (Doolittle's) drawn up beyond Patterson's, both under arms and facing the road from Lechmere Point, by which the British had made their midnight march to Lexington on April 19th. According to diaries of some of Prescott's command, the troops were much surprised at this massing of not only Patterson's regiment of Putnam's advanced force, but an additional regiment posted there that night, both of them under arms and covering the road from Lechmere Point. We also know that when Prescott's column arrived at Charlestown Neck they found wagons with intrenching tools and Knowlton's detachment of Connecticut troops; Knowlton, the senior captain of Putnam's regiment, encamped at Inman's Farm, half a mile in advance of the Cambridge Lines; they also found there Colonel Gridley, chief engineer of the army, and "a general officer," whose name is not given; that, arriving at the summit of Bunker Hill, a warm discussion took place between the "general," Colonel Gridley, and Colonel Prescott as to where to throw up the intrenchment; that finally the column continued their march down Bunker Hill and turning to the right selected the broad level top of Breed's Hill and set to work at

midnight building a redoubt some eight rods square, which Gridley there staked out.

Exactly what was the subject of the consultation between the "general" (who could be none other than Putnam), the skilful engineer Gridley, and the commanding officer of the Massachusetts fatigue party, Colonel Prescott, we are not informed; but in general tenor it appears to have been whether to intrench on the summit of Bunker Hill or lower down on Breed's Hill.

The report of the battle, drawn up by a committee of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, states that by "some mistake of orders" the intrenchment was made on Breed's instead of on Bunker Hill. General Ward later in life said, "The detachment, ordered to Bunker Hill, had imprudently exposed themselves in proceeding so far" (Ward's "History of Shrewsbury," 84), and as Colonel Prescott had received his orders, apparently verbal orders, from General Ward, we may assume that Prescott felt obliged to intrench on Bunker Hill, where for several weeks an American guard had been posted. But Gridley was a skilful engineer officer; he was engineer and chief of artillery of the Massachusetts army that captured Louisburg in 1745, and for his distinguished services there was commissioned as captain of the 50th Regular Infantry in the British army. In 1755 he was made chief engineer with the rank of colonel and built the fortifications at Lake George; in 1758, during the famous final siege of Louisburg, he so greatly distinguished himself as to receive unusual personal honors from General Amherst, British commander-in-chief in America; and General Wolfe selected him to accompany his army to Quebec as chief of the Provincial Artillery; and it was Gridley who, by wonderful skill and perseverance, drew up two small guns which did such excellent service in Wolfe's decisive battle on the Heights of Abraham. These details of Gridley's record as a master of military

engineering and of artillery service are stated here as the probable reason why the summit of Bunker Hill was deemed unfit for the proposed intrenchment; namely, the slope towards Boston was too rapid for effective fire of either infantry or artillery, while the southern side, towards the valley on the line of the present Main Street, was so precipitous that an enemy marching along the foot of the southern side of the hill would be absolutely safe from the fire of troops on the summit. Under such natural conditions, to intrench the summit of Bunker Hill (110 feet high) would expose the garrison to certain and easy capture by a force thus marching in safety to cut off their retreat by Charlestown Neck. It was, therefore, the duty of Colonel Gridley as chief engineer to insist upon the abandonment of Bunker Hill as a defensible position.

For other than scientific reasons Putnam would naturally favor Breed's Hill. He was the foremost in urging the intrenching in Charlestown in such way as most surely to compel the British to attack on that side of Boston, instead of going to Dorchester Neck. To take position on Bunker Hill would not only expose the troops there intrenched to the most obvious risk of capture, but, with such artillery as we then had at Cambridge, we could not seriously harm either the town of Boston or the British shipping in the inner harbor, between Boston and Noddles Island (now East Boston). But over and above technical military considerations was the supreme necessity, as Putnam and his colleagues in the Council of War conceived it, of surely compelling the British to attack in front under conditions calculated to cause them the utmost possible loss, with the purpose of crippling their Field Force, if possible, to such an extent as to disable them for seizing the Dorchester peninsula. To this end the nearer approach of Breed's Hill to Boston was a decisive argument in its favor.

Let us now examine the military topography of Charlestown peninsula, the field of the approaching battle.

#### MILITARY TOPOGRAPHY OF CHARLESTOWN.

In 1775 Charlestown was a triangular peninsula one mile in length from the isthmus, or neck, to the middle of the shore facing Boston. Its northeast side along the Mystic River was a mile and a quarter long, and for half its length precipitous; its southeast side opposite Boston was three quarters of a mile long and generally level; the ground rising to a low hill on the south around which the town of Charlestown was built, and at its northerly end, known as Charlestown Point, was a gentle hill thirty-five feet high known as Moulton's Hill, where General Howe landed his division a little after noon on the day of the battle.

The axis of the peninsula ran southeast from the Neck 1300 yards to the Redoubt on Breed's Hill, and thence continued on the same course 500 yards to Madlin's shipyard, where Clinton's reinforcements landed in time to take a decisive part in the final attack upon the Redoubt.

Bunker Hill was a narrow ridge, 800 yards long and 300 yards wide at its base, rising sharply from the Mystic Beach to an elevation of 110 feet; its summit was very narrow, its northern and southern sides too precipitous for a defensible position. Undoubtedly Colonel Gridley, as a military engineer, fully realized that to fortify the summit of Bunker Hill would be to expose its garrison to an easy capture, and for that reason the intrenchment was built on the strong and defensible but lower summit of Breed's Hill. The Bunker Hill Road followed the ridge at two-thirds of the distance across from the Mystic to its southern foot, looking down upon the swampy valley between its southern foot and the level Main Street leading from the Ferry to the Neck. The westerly ascent of Bunker Hill was easy, the descent east-



erly was quite steep for 300 yards to a level pasture, 20 feet above the sea level, known as the Tongue of Land, extending 200 yards from the Bunker Hill Road to the grass edge over Mystic Beach, and from the foot of the hill 300 yards towards the valley between Breed's Hill and Moulton's Hill. At the foot of Bunker Hill a narrow road (Elm Street) led off southerly from the Bunker Hill Road at right angles towards High Street, 300 yards distant, which connects with the Main Street and the town by a short steep street then known as Green's Lane.

This crossroad, the junction of Elm Street with the Bunker Hill Road, was the key of the American position on Breed's Hill; it was not only on the only line of retreat from the Redoubt, but from this point Howe, with his four battalions reserved for the purpose, could attack the Redoubt and its breastwork extension from their rear, while Pigot with his two remaining battalions attacked them in front. This was the plan of General Howe for the capture or destruction of the American forces on Breed's Hill, and was apparently warranted by every fair military consideration. There were, however, obstructions along the American front to which Howe evidently had not, and probably the Americans had not, given serious consideration as military obstacles of prime importance—the strong cattle fences between the pastures to which Bunker and Breed's hills were given up. These fences were made of field stones piled up in clearing the ground, and were topped by strong post and rail fences, two rails above the stone wall. General Howe, in his letter of June 22, 1775, to his brother Admiral Howe, describes these obstructions thus:

“The intermediate space between the two Armies was cut  
“by fences formed of strong posts and close railing, very  
“high and which could not be broken readily. Had they  
“not been in our way, the Rebels would have been

“quickly forced upon *their* Left, without any great loss  
“on our side. Upon *our* Left, Pigot met with the  
“same obstructions in his advance to the attack of  
“the Redoubt.”

From this crossroad, which was the only line of communication between Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill and which was built between the Slough on the east and a similar wet hollow on the west, the road rose quite rapidly to the height of land near the corner of Elm and High streets; from about this point there was a brookway in the wet season, though probably dry before midsummer, which had worn a deep ravine down the northerly side of Breed's Hill to the pool and swamp, known in the history of the battle as the Slough. This ravine lay between the Redoubt and Elm Street. The length of this brookway was about 200 yards in which the descent was about 40 feet and, near the Slough, very rapid. Thus there was formed a sort of bluff at the angle between the brookway and the Slough, indicated on the De Berniere plan of the battle (as originally published in 1818 in the *Analectic Magazine of Philadelphia*) by three redans, one above the other, as if troops were formed—possibly intrenched—on both sides of the salient angle of this bluff, in three lines of battle, some 50 yards in front of the extreme right of the Rail Fence Line and 100 yards south of Bunker Hill Road. This position—covered by the impassable Slough in front, by the Rail Fence Line on the left, and by the Redoubt and Breast-work on the right—was most skilfully selected, as it enfiladed the Tongue of Land in front of the Rail Fence with a triple line of musketry. Apparently the fire of the Americans from this point was especially notable for its destructiveness, for De Berniere marks it “*P—Place from whence ye Grenadiers received a verry heavy fire.*” Presumably this was the point to which Prescott sent Knowlton's Connecticut troops and Captain Callender's two guns taken from the Redoubt, as

soon as the British landed at Charlestown Point, in order to cover his left flank and rear.

We know that Knowlton's men made a good cover by putting two fences together and filling the space with sods, brush, and grass. Howe describes the American "centre and left as covered by a breastwork, a part of it cannon-proof"; and this was quite possible for a resourceful man like Captain Knowlton to do in the two hours or upwards of grace granted him between the landing of Howe's first force and the general attack along the entire front after the failure of the Light Infantry attack. The Rail Fence Line between Bunker Hill Road and Mystic Beach was merely an ordinary pasture fence through which rails were thrust on which hay was hung to hide the troops from the enemy advancing against it in front; as a defence against the enemy's fire this Rail Fence Line was of slight use beyond its moral effect upon the 750 green troops of the New Hampshire regiments of Stark and Reed, which had been hurriedly thrown together in considerably less than half an hour; as an ambuscade from which — suddenly rising at the last moment when the enemy was struggling to get through or over the stout pasture fences within a hundred yards in front of the Rail Fence — the defenders could pour deadly volleys into their broken ranks, this simple line was of incalculable military importance, before which the splendid Grenadier Battalion was "served up in companies in front of the grass fence. before they could deploy," as a British officer writes.

From the descriptions, which have come down to us, of the grenadier formation in approaching the Rail Fence, they seem to have advanced in very deep files several yards apart — the new formation recently introduced by General Howe for the Light Infantry, somewhat like our present company column marching by the flank without doubling. Certainly this would be a convenient formation for advancing through gaps made

in the fences. As the last fence to be crossed was less than 100 yards in front of the Rail Fence it seems that these company columns were not allowed to deploy into line of battle before they were mowed down by an unbroken sheet of fire which was kept up, according to the accounts we have, for ten to fifteen minutes; as Stark said, "I never saw sheep lying thicker in a sheep fold, than the British Regulars in front of my line." We also know that the next day, by actual count, there were 96 dead non-commissioned officers and privates between the sward and the beach in Stark's front — nearly one-half of the 206 reported killed. We also know the order of the companies: that the Grenadier Company of the 23d Regiment had the right of the line; next came the Grenadiers of the 4th, 10th, and 52d Regiments: that of the 23d Regiment Company (44 men) all but 5 were killed or wounded; of the 4th all but 4; of the 52d all but 8; while of the Light Infantry Company of the 35th Regiment — posted on the right of the 23d — only 3 of its 35 enlisted men and neither of its 3 officers escaped scatheless; and its Grenadier Company suffered as much: as to the 10th, we know that the loss in the Light Infantry and Grenadier companies aggregated 47 enlisted men and all of their 6 officers. It goes without saying that a loss of over eighty per cent of the entire right half of the Grenadier Battalion spells "canister," in addition to musketry fire of ten to fifteen minutes; and we have depositions, taken for another purpose, which incidentally indicate precisely when and where this canister fire swept away the right half of the Grenadier Battalion. Let us state and marshal the facts contained in several of these depositions:

When Bridge's regiment was sent to Charlestown with Colonel Prescott on the night of June 16th, three of its companies were retained at Cambridge, at Ward's headquarters, under Major Brooks; one of these three companies was commanded by Captain Ford, who, after performing some special

staff service, received the general's permission to go alone with his company to Charlestown. General Putnam met them on Bunker Hill and ordered Captain Ford to take Callender's deserted guns to the Rail Fence. We will now allow our witnesses to testify:

(1) General Pierce of Hillsborough, N. H., father of President Franklin Pierce, then a private in Captain Ford's company of Bridge's regiment, says in his deposition:

"Putnam requested our company to drag Callender's guns down Bunker Hill; at Captain Ford's permission we drew them to the rail fence."

(2) Israel Hunt of Dunstable, of Ford's company, says:

"General Putnam and Captain Ford brought up a field piece to the rail fence and fired it a number of times."

(3) John Yeomans of Norwich, one of Putnam's Connecticut troops in Knowlton's detachment, says that he saw a great deal of General Putnam during the battle, and he adds:

"He went to his saddlebags and took a canvas bag of musket bullets, loaded the cannon and fired it at a number of officers who were consulting under a tree."

(4) Alexander Davidson of Captain Ford's company deposes that

"Putnam ordered Captain Ford to carry Callender's deserted guns to the rail-fence; that Putnam accompanied them and put them in position; that he remembers Putnam's expression when the Second discharge of one of the guns, loaded with canister, made a lane through the enemy."

Thus we have the testimony of eye-witnesses to the use of canister at the Rail Fence, and we can fix the time with sufficient accuracy by (5) Capt. John Barker of Reed's regiment, which was at the Rail Fence on Stark's right and Knowlton's left, who says of General Putnam:

“Between the 1st and 2d attacks he came to about the  
“centre of our regiment, warmly praised the men for their  
“bravery and encouraged them to fight well, should the  
“enemy come again.”

This was during the considerable delay, when Howe sent a messenger by boat across to Copp's Hill to have the town of Charlestown set on fire by shells in order to relieve Pigot, who could not attack the Redoubt until the Americans, firing on his two regiments from the loopholed houses, had been compelled to leave them.

It is perfectly evident that, with his Light Infantry Battalion hors du combat in the first attack along Mystic Beach, and his Grenadier Battalion even more severely cut up in their frontal attack on the Rail Fence in the second (or general) attack, Howe should have deemed the American Left impregnable and reorganized his line of battle to support Clinton's attack on the American Right with his fresh troops, made on the southerly front of the Redoubt by the 47th Regiment and the Marines.

The importance of the Rail Fence Line can hardly be over-estimated; the excellence of the position taken to cover the crossroads, the junction of Elm Street with the Bunker Hill Road, by which alone could the retreat from the Redoubt be made, was due in no small degree to the level ground crossed by pasture fences, over which the enemy would have marched to attack it in front, and which could not be turned on either flank because of the Slough on the south and the Mystic on the north. The selection, therefore, of this position was excellent and in strict accordance with the principles of grand tactics. Hence we may infer that the selection of this line was probably made by some officer versed in these advanced rules of the art of war; and, so far as we know, there was but one officer on the field that day of whom we can presume such knowledge, Col. Richard Gridley, the really great and experienced

engineer, who we know was severely wounded near the Rail Fence at the time the Redoubt was carried in the third attack. We also know that Knowlton's Connecticut troops were admirably posted behind the head of the Slough, a little in advance of the Rail Fence on the right, so as to enfilade its front, as it were, a bastion covering also the exposed end of the Breastwork—all of which precautions came peculiarly within the sphere of a military engineer. The fact that immediately after the battle Colonel Gridley was promoted to be major-general is indicative of the recognition by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress of his pre-eminent service on that day, and that Washington, impressed with his rare gifts as a military engineer and ordnance officer, urged him to accompany the army to New York, an honor which he felt obliged to decline on account of age and impaired health.

Certainly his selection of Breed's Hill with the level pasture in front indicates the same military principle as was applied in the selection of the Rail Fence Line; and it is quite clear that Breed's Hill was an excellently chosen ground for the intrenchment, probably by far the best on the peninsula, as Bunker Hill was the worst possible for reasons already stated.

That the maintenance of the Rail Fence Line was recognized as of supreme importance may be inferred from the fact that it was defended by 800 men under Stark, Reed, and Knowlton—as many as could be used on that front. Moreover, a second line of battle, some 100 yards to the right and rear of the Rail Fence, seems to have been formed along Elm Street from Bunker Hill Road to High Street as reinforcements arrived; and that, some 50 yards in advance of this second line on its right, a line of defence was started, after Charlestown was set on fire, on Green Street, between High and Main streets, which was lined with stone walls; that at the

corner of Main and Green streets there was a tavern and some barns loopholed for defence; that this line, though short and steep, was well manned with troops who kept up a fire so hot against the left of Clinton's line in front of the south face of the Redoubt that the De Berniere map specially notes these buildings and "part of ye 47th and Marines to silence ye fire of a Barne." This, it may be observed, was the second and only other instance noted on the map of exceptional loss from the American fire, the other being from Knowlton's position at the head of the Slough. This map specifies the "2d Marines" as the marines detached for this duty, and we know that only the Light Infantry and Grenadier companies of the 2d Battalion of Marines were engaged and that 35 enlisted men and 5 of their 6 officers were killed or wounded—not less than one-half of the two companies. Adjutant Waller of the 1st Battalion of Marines, posted on the right of the 47th Regiment, in a letter home of June 22d, gives a very vivid description of this part of the battle, where Clinton led the 47th Regiment and the Marines (just landed) "close under the natural defences of the Redoubt; . . . but when we came immediately under the work, we were checked by the severe fire of the enemy, but did not retreat one inch. We were now all in confusion, after being broke several times in getting over the rails, etc. . . . and had we stopped there much longer the enemy would have picked us all off." Surely the troops on the American Right, along the line of Green Street, rivaled their fellow-soldiers on the left at the Rail Fence Line, in proportion to their numbers. *There* we had 800 men fighting half their number at a time; *here* the numbers were reversed; the Green Street Line was attacked by the 2d Marines (two companies) and part of the 47th Regiment, a force apparently twice as numerous as the defenders; in both cases the "heavier battalion" won. Captain Warner's company of Little's regiment bravely defended this Green Street Line; he



carried into action 23 men, of whom 17 were killed or wounded (according to Swett's History, 51). There were also several other companies, probably those which had made such havoc on Pigot's left from the houses in Charlestown before the town was set on fire to drive them out. At all events they made a gallant fight as long as it was possible. But they had not, as Stark had, the advantage of a level field, a glacis, on their front; the hill was very steep at that point and not adapted to defence.

Thus we have critically examined the military topography of the peninsula of Charlestown, indicating the military advantages and disadvantages of the several parts which became the scene of the conflict. There is, however, one feature which can be briefly disposed of; namely, Why did not the British move up by water to the Neck and there cut off the retreat of the Americans from Breed's Hill? We have the excellent De Barras map and the Pelham map of Boston and the vicinity; they were both published by act of Parliament; they give the soundings off both sides of the Neck, showing mudflats bare at the stage of tide when the battle was in progress and navigable only for ships' boats at high tide for at least two-fifths of a mile from shore. The "Glasgow" off Lechmere Point and Burgoyne from Copp's Hill did all that could be done to prevent troops crossing the Neck by the incessant fire of 24-pounder guns, at a distance respectively of half a mile and a mile. The noise was, however, disproportionate to the damage done.

The "Valley" in Charlestown, to which reference is made in some of the old diaries and letters as being swept by the British guns, lay between the southern foot of Breed's and Bunker hills and the low hills known as Town Hill, School Hill, and Cemetery Hill, which rose some 20 to 30 feet high on the water side towards Lechmere Point. This valley opened a nearly straight laneway for artillery fire from the

Copp's Hill Battery of 24-pounder guns to Charlestown Neck, a mile distant, there crossing the fire of the 24-pounder guns of the "Glasgow" frigate off Lechmere Point only 600 yards from the Neck, which were enfilading the Neck with round shot and bar shot to prevent American reinforcements from crossing the Neck. Burgoyne grumbles in his letter to Lord Stanley that from his post at the Copp's Hill Battery he was "an almost useless spectator, for my whole business lay in presiding, during a great part of the action, over a cannonade." But Trevelyan very justly observes that he could not have been more usefully employed, and that the fire of his batteries, though too distant to be very murderous, had a more decisive influence on the fate of the day than if he had been mowing down whole columns of infantry with grape at point-blank range, and he states why:—"To march through a tornado of round shot across a narrow causeway and over a barren hill into a torrent of British bullets which flowed over the heads of those for whom they were intended [*i.e.* the American line of battle] would have tried old and well-led troops." (Trevelyan's "History of American Revolution," I. 332.) It was from this battery that a carcass was thrown which set Charlestown on fire,—a perfectly justifiable proceeding because the houses were occupied by a swarm of Americans harassing Pigot so that he could not attack the Redoubt until they were driven away. The town was closely packed with about 600 wooden buildings within a space of a quarter of a mile square; the fire did not extend quite so far as the tavern and barns at the corner of Green and Main streets; these last-named buildings were also burned, because occupied by our troops, during the third attack.

Through the "Valley" a level road, called Main Street, ran from Charlestown Ferry to Charlestown Neck, a mile long and nearly straight; for the last third of a mile marsh on the left and swamp on the right to the foot of Bunker Hill

without a house on either side: apparently a narrow corduroy road, by which the Americans could not safely retreat under the guns of the "Glasgow" and the Copp's Hill Battery. At the beginning of this bad part of the road was the settlement of some two dozen houses, near the gristmill which was built at the Charlestown end of a milldam. This dam was built of stones and timber-piles across the shallow inlet between Charlestown and Cobble Hill on the mainland; from the centre of the milldam to Charlestown Neck the distance was 500 yards; for another hundred yards in front of the milldam the mudflats made a landing impracticable. The reason why the British did not try to land at the Neck on the south side of it is obvious; on the north side the mudflats for 700 yards offered a similar obstacle. The only practicable landing was at the mouth of Willis Creek, between Cobble Hill and Lechmere Point, which was navigable by boats at three-quarters tide, certainly halfway to Redoubt No. 3, — to the ford where the road from Cambridge to Lechmere Point crossed the Creek. This was the road by which the British had marched to Lexington on April 19th; it was the shortest and best approach to the main American camp at Cambridge and the only practicable route to get to Charlestown Neck. In fact this was the weak point of the American position between the Charles and the Mystic rivers. General Ward and his advisers knew it and because it was also familiar to the British, they were right in assuming that the British generals were equally aware of its importance: boats filled with troops could easily reach the mouth of Willis Creek — only one mile from their camp at Barton's Point in Boston, and two miles from the North Battery, where part of Howe's and Clinton's forces embarked that fateful day. The presence of the "Symetry" transport laden with troops off the mouth of Willis Creek, with two flat-boats (gondolas) used for landing troops, emphasized the probability that the main attack would

be directed against the weak point of our position, against our main camp and magazines at Cambridge, and that the attack at Charlestown was really a feint to induce us to weaken our fortified camp by sending reinforcements to Charlestown. Ward had as a volunteer aide-de-camp that day the brilliant and alert Knox, afterward famous as chief of artillery; his special duty was to watch the movements of the "Symetry" and the Boston shore, whether troops were embarking there for the Cambridge shore. Under the circumstances Ward was entirely justified in adhering to this watchful attitude; he ought not to have acted otherwise.

We have already discussed that source and scope of the information of the British plan of offensive operations which decided the American Council of War to occupy and fortify Charlestown on the night of June 16th for the purpose of diverting the British from their plan to seize Dorchester Neck on the 18th and to compel them to fight against the Americans behind intrenchments, whereby they would suffer disproportionate losses, perhaps enough to cripple and demoralize them; and, for this movement, were willing to "risk only 2000 men" of the 8000 intrenched at Cambridge. Our generals were too wise to risk a general battle in the open field where the famous British generals with their highly disciplined and well-organized veterans would probably have no difficulty in routing and dispersing our half-organized army. It was, therefore, Ward's sound policy to keep his main force well in hand within our Cambridge Lines so long, at least, as that position was in danger of being attacked by the way of Willis Creek; and it was equally obvious that, if the British general by attacking Charlestown could induce Ward to weaken his main army at Cambridge, by hurrying large reinforcements to Charlestown, an equal force under Clinton, embarking in boats on the Boston shore, could be landed at the mouth of Willis Creek and reach Cambridge within an hour, and then in suitable

force hurried to Charlestown Neck to "bottle up" (to use General Grant's expressive word) the entire American force on Charlestown peninsula. On the other hand, so long as the main army was at Cambridge in its strongly intrenched position, there would be little danger of the British detaching a sufficient force to cut off the Americans in their retreat over Charlestown Neck. Therefore Ward's policy included the safety of both the camp and magazines at Cambridge and the safety of the forces in Charlestown when they should retreat, as it was intended they should.

We have General Ward's own statement on this point to his grandson, Andrew Henshaw Ward, — graduate of Harvard (1808) and a prominent lawyer, — who was sixteen years old at the general's death in 1800; this statement may be read in Mr. A. H. Ward's "History of the Town of Shrewsbury," the home of his family.

[*Extract*]

"Some things connected with that event [*i.e.* Bunker Hill] I well remember to have heard my grandfather, General Ward, then commanding at Cambridge, relate in conversation with his neighbours and others in the latter part of his life. On such occasions revolutionary events were brought up to view and talked over with absorbing interest; and many interesting details related, *then* seemingly well understood. Of one in particular . . . that General Ward did not, when repeatedly pressed for that purpose while the battle was raging, send reinforcements from Cambridge for their relief. . . . At the conversations alluded to, there was no occasion for explanations; the recitals were not to satisfy doubts, but merely historical of the circumstances connected with what took place on that day and the precautions that were adopted to guard against being circumvented by the enemy. He said: —

"The detachment ordered to Bunker Hill had imprudently  
"exposed themselves in proceeding so far. . . . When  
"he learned that they were attacked by a detachment of  
"British troops who had passed over in boats from  
"Boston, he considered it a *feint* on the part of the

“British to draw the main army from Head Quarters at Cambridge to the Battle-ground; and then, the larger portion of their troops being still in Boston, push them across the River, land them at Lechmere’s Point, and proceed directly to Cambridge, — destroy the Magazines there and close the avenue at Charlestown Neck; whereby the Provincials would be enclosed within the peninsula of Charlestown, where, by reason of small supplies of ammunition and subsistence they could not long hold out. . . . That a vigilant lookout was kept up towards Boston opposite Lechmere’s Point, from an expectation that a sudden embarkation would take place there for Head Quarters at Cambridge, and that the *Main Battle* would be fought there; that he always considered the attack on the Hill [*i.e.* Breed’s Hill] intended as a *feint*, and that the reason, why an embarkation for Cambridge did not take place, arose from the repeated repulses of the first body of troops sent over to Charlestown, — which, being seen from Boston, occasioned so large reinforcement to be sent to their relief that the main object was thereby defeated.”

Mr. Andrew H. Ward continues thus:

“When it was ascertained that a reinforcement of British troops had been sent over to Charlestown and their disposable force in Boston thereby so reduced as to make an attack at Head Quarters improbable, reinforcements were ordered from Cambridge. Col. Jonathan Ward (commanding Ward’s own regiment), then stationed at Fort No. 2 [on the extreme right of the Cambridge lines] was directed, as appears from the General’s Orderly Book, to march his regiment with the utmost dispatch, by the way of Lechmere’s Point — keeping a strict lookout towards Boston on his march.” (Ward’s “History of Shrewsbury,” 53–55.)

It is not necessary to quote the continuation of Ward’s account beyond stating that, when the regiment had nearly reached Charlestown Neck, it was halted by a member of the Committee of Safety, which was vested with supreme military authority by law; but that Colonel Ward, with three

companies, the remaining companies remaining where halted, pushed over to Bunker Hill and did good service near the Rail Fence in covering the retreat.

We have this statement of Colonel Ward's march from Fort No. 2 to Charlestown Neck confirmed in the "Town History of Leicester," written by Hon. Emory Washburn, later Governor of Massachusetts, whose grandfather, Capt. Seth Washburn of Leicester, commanded a company in Ward's regiment on that march and greatly distinguished himself in covering the retreat. Captain Washburn says, "On reaching Lechmere's Point, we were halted for near an hour; the reason for this delay I never understood," and he then repeats the details of the halting of the regiment by Dr. Church, a member of the Committee of Safety, before crossing Charlestown Neck, who told the commanding officer that orders had been sent that no more troops should go into action; whereupon Captain Washburn denounced him as a Tory and called for volunteers, his whole company stepped forward and the companies of Captains Lunt and Cushing, which practically compelled Lieutenant-Colonel Ward to go with them to Charlestown, leaving the other companies under his Major, Barnes. (Washburn's "History of Leicester," 304.)

This incident confirms Ward's statement that, in dispatching his own trusty regiment by way of Lechmere's Point, with orders to keep a "sharp lookout towards Boston," General Ward was even then not perfectly satisfied that the danger was over of a sudden embarkation at Boston for Lechmere's Point; and the delay of an hour there within sound of the battle, though very irritating to his impatient troops, and "never understood" by Captain Washburn, was prudent and in accordance with the general's express orders. Nay, more, it indicates that Colonel Ward himself was not fully satisfied until after an hour's waiting and watching; and we can also, by this fact, very nearly fix the time when the

general ordered reinforcements from Cambridge — certainly when Ward's regiment marched — as about an hour and a half before the third attack; and we may assume that Colonel Ward did not move from Lechmere's Point until he had seen Clinton's reinforcements land at Charlestown, as he could from that position. Therefore we may fix the time of Ward's order to reinforce from Cambridge as during the wait between the first and second attack, after he knew of the first British repulse.

It has been assumed from the fact that General Ward did not leave his headquarters at Cambridge that he was either incompetent or physically incapacitated for command. In answer to the charge of military incapacity it may be observed that Ward was appointed the first major-general of the three appointed by the Continental Congress, and that Washington put him in command of the American right wing at Roxbury to which was assigned the duty of seeing that the British did not get possession of Dorchester peninsula; and that Washington was very urgent that Ward should continue in his command when the army was moved to New York, which honor Ward was forced to decline on account of ill health. It was also known that he was greatly afflicted with gravel, making it difficult to ride horseback, so that he left personal inspection of the camp, as far as possible, to more active, if not younger men; though it may be remarked that in 1775 General Ward was but forty-eight years old and in his mental prime, that of his lieutenants, General Putnam was fifty-three, General Thomas was fifty, and Colonel Stark was forty-seven; that the average age of the seven leading American generals of the army besieging Boston in 1775-76 was forty-five years, and of the seven leading British generals in Boston was forty-eight years.

But another more conclusive answer to this criticism is that the position of the officer commanding a besieging army with



a front of over ten miles, as in this case, is not on the skirmish line, nor in commanding detachments, nor at the head of his men in battle. He has his whole front to consider and provide for; it is he who must plan the general movements, leaving the details of their execution to his subordinates in command of the separate units of the whole command; it is he who must decide when, where, and with what force to reinforce or support the threatened parts of his battle front. For these reasons it is of prime importance to have and maintain his headquarters in a central position — whether on the field of battle or in the operations of a siege — as the best means of keeping in touch with and receiving reports promptly from all parts of his battle front, and thus be able to act promptly and intelligently on the instant.

Criticisms like these arise from a misconception of the position and duties of an army commander; in fact, of any officer with an independent command, whether on land or on the sea. Captain Mahan has very truly said: "In the foremost naval man of modern times, Nelson, we see the great strategist, the great tactician, the great fighting man; but the careful student of his letters that, underlying all, is the great administrator." In answer to the question "Wherein did our General Sherman's glorious success mainly lie?" General Corse, the hero of Allatoona, who had served on Sherman's staff, replied: "It was because he was the best Quartermaster in the United States Army." Thus, underlying all other special qualifications of a great general, administrative ability is the foremost, and as incidentally inseparable from it is that rare foresight which not only foresees events, but fathoms the enemy's plans and methods of execution.

From what has already been stated, it is evident that General Ward did possess this rarest of military gifts; that he knew just where his own position at Cambridge, between the Charles and the Mystic, was weak; that he foresaw that the British

generals would probably attack him there as the likeliest way to attain their campaign objective — the raising of the Siege of Boston ; and for this reason he kept his main army well in hand at Cambridge until the danger of the British attack upon Cambridge, by way of Lechmere Point and Willis Creek, was past, before weakening his main army to reinforce the detachment sent to intrench at Charlestown. Now, from Howe's own letters, still in manuscript in private collections in England, we know that Howe's objective was Cambridge by way of Charlestown, supported, as it seems, by a strong column advancing thither by way of Lechmere Point and Willis Creek.

That the Willis Creek Line was recognized as the most available landing-place for movements from Boston to Cambridge, or from the Cambridge shore to Boston, is shown by the erection of two of the strongest works on the American advanced line — one at Lechmere Point on the south side of the mouth of Willis Creek, and the other directly opposite at Cobble Hill on the north side of the creek — to prevent the British from attacking Cambridge by boats from Boston. Another fact is that Washington, in preparing to seize Dorchester Heights in March, 1776, ordered Putnam to be ready to attack the town when the British army should attack our new position on Dorchester Heights. For this service Putnam was to send two thousand men under General Sullivan and, as a separate command, two thousand more under General Greene. These two divisions under General Putnam's personal command were to embark in boats at the mouth of Willis Creek, cross the Charles River to Barton's Point and to the Powder House, respectively, under cover of three floating batteries, and thence crossing over to Boston Common, march together to attack the British Lines on Boston Neck from the rear, while Washington attacked them in front from Roxbury. This order of Washington indicates that

he held the same opinion as General Ward regarding the military importance of the Willis Creek Line for defensive and offensive operations.

SIR THOMAS GAGE, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL (1721-1787).

General Gage's military and civil career had been, up to his arrival in Boston in May, 1774, creditable in every respect. He was a gallant and capable officer, of the highest personal character, most humane and kindly towards those whom he had governed, and without a stain upon his official fidelity and personal honor during his seventeen years of service in responsible positions in America. It is easily understood why this excellent record should have commended him to George III; and, whatever that king's short-comings in other respects, he was very careful in selecting his generals for their merit and their fitness for the work in hand.

General Gage had served with distinction in America since 1755, closing the French War and completing the Conquest of Canada by the capture of Montreal in 1760. In 1761 he was promoted to be Major General and appointed Governor of Montreal and Upper Canada, where his mild and considerate rule speedily brought about the loyal acquiescence and permanent pacification of Upper Canada—in marked contrast with the severity of General Murray at Quebec, which resulted in a sullen opposition ingrained to this day in the French Canadian. In view of this eminent service he was made Commander-in-chief of the British Army in North America in 1763, with his headquarters in New York; and he continued his service there with similar success until 1772, when he went back to England on leave of absence after seventeen years of continuous service in America, leaving Maj. Gen. Sir Frederick Haldimand (who in 1778 succeeded Gen. Sir Guy Carleton as Governor and Commander-in-chief of Canada) in command during his absence. Previous to his return his

service as commander-in-chief had been so satisfactory that the king, in 1770, promoted him to be lieutenant-general in the British army. During his nine years' service in the British North American Colonies as commander-in-chief, his tactful and kindly rule had so impressed itself upon the people of New York and the neighboring provinces to the southward that no serious disturbance had arisen between them and Great Britain; this, in marked contrast with the course of events in the New England Colonies, was naturally deemed proof of his especial fitness for the onerous duties of Governor and Captain General of the Province of Massachusetts, in addition to those of Commander-in-chief in North America.

It may be remarked, in this connection, that during all these years of service in America General Gage had been only once in Boston; namely, when the question of quartering troops upon the town was raised and vehemently denied by Samuel Adams and the Town Meeting in 1768. To allay the ill-feeling and to assure due respect to the military rights of the king and the civil rights of the town, General Gage came on from New York to personally investigate the conflicting claims; and when he was shown the Act of Parliament upon which the town's claim was founded, he promptly declined to enforce the order for quartering troops on the town. This tactful obedience to the Act of Parliament by General Gage was followed by conciliatory action by the Provincial Assembly; and the two additional regiments which had come from Halifax were ordered back, being judged by General Gage as quite unnecessary. This incident would naturally predispose the people of Massachusetts in favor of Gage as their new Governor; and, under a normal condition of affairs between the Province and the Home Government, there would probably have been no serious trouble. But, unfortunately for him, conditions at this time in England were not normal — a commercial crisis, second only to the

South Sea Bubble crisis, had struck a crushing blow to public and private credit; on every side manufactories were closing, bankruptcies spreading, and, to cap the pyramid of woes, the East India Company could neither pay its ordinary dividends, nor even its debts. Any measure which could ease this widespread distress would be passed by Parliament in spite of the very able opposition of Chatham, Burke, Camden, and others to the king's determined policy to tax the American Colonies. Let us briefly examine the situation in England in 1772, when General Gage arrived in London.

The taxation policy of 1769 had been met by the Colonies entering into an agreement not to import any British goods or any other products coming thither from England until the right to tax the Colonies, without representation, was disclaimed. The distress thus caused became so great that the import taxes in America had been taken off of everything but tea, even though it was stated in Parliament that the tea tax did not bring into the treasury over three hundred pounds a year; that the tea tax in America being only three pence a pound, while the English consumer had to pay an import duty of six pence a pound, the Colonists had no just ground of complaint. The king had expressed a desire to conciliate America and restore harmony; but he had also declared that he would never be intimidated by the threats or combinations of the Colonies to make unreasonable concessions. The tea tax was retained and it was determined to enforce it by the whole power of the Crown, with the concurrence of a large majority of both Houses of Parliament. The maintenance of this insignificant import duty on tea imported into America, as evidence of the claim of Parliament's right to tax the Colonies, has been not uncommonly believed to have been the main, if not the only intelligible, reason for its retention; certainly it seems to have been so considered by the American Colonies, and, therefore, to be

resisted at all hazards. But it may be questioned whether there were not other reasons, more general than the king's persistent determination to establish this principle, which were of equal weight in determining Parliament to concur. What was the internal condition of England at that juncture?

The refusal of the Colonies to receive British manufactures and the tea and other commodities imported into England by the East India Company had, as has been stated, caused a commercial crisis of almost unprecedented severity, followed by bankruptcies and universal distress throughout the kingdom.

#### THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AS A STORM CENTRE.

The greatest commercial company in England, probably also in Europe, was the East India Company; and upon this company the American non-importation covenant had delivered a blow so great as to threaten its bankruptcy. The East India Company, convinced that the non-importation agreement would have but a short life, had continued its importation of teas until a large proportion of their quick capital was locked up in their crowded warehouses in London, mainly in teas for which there was no market in the American Colonies, which had been their best customers. The Company could not pay dividends, nor even its current indebtedness; its shares fell one-half in their market value; these evils affected the individual holders; but the Administration and Parliament were made to realize that the Company could not pay the annual £400,000 (as import duties) into the treasury and that it was on the verge of bankruptcy [Bancroft's "History of the United States," I. 438]. There seemed but one way to relieve the Company — to reopen the American market for tea, an exclusively East India commodity, for the importation of which the Company had the monopoly under royal charter. This fact indicates that peculiar relations existed between the

British Government and the East India Company, which it may be instructive to examine as one of the precursors of the American Revolution — as the match presently to be dropped into the political cauldron, in both mother country and the Colonies, already seething and soon to explode and to rend the tie between them. It is, moreover, particularly important to realize that General Gage, in accepting the position of Governor of Massachusetts, was to be tossed about in the political maelstrom which probably no man in England could control; and that Gage could never be sure of support at home in case he acted vigorously to repress what no man living could cure; but perfectly sure of being made the scapegoat by the one party or the other in England, whatever he might do or say in America.

Bancroft vividly depicts the great commercial crisis in England, attributed to the non-importation agreement of the American Colonies; and how the East India Company humbly came before Parliament, confessing their losses and threatened ruin, and entreated assistance and relief, and particularly that the American market should be reopened for their teas: but there the historian stops short, in that he does not state the connection between the East India Company and the British Government. An examination of the relations between the British Government and the East India Company cannot fail to show the probable cause for Parliament's willingness, if not eagerness, to retain the tea tax, for reasons quite irrespective of the king's dogged insistence for its retention as a prerogative right, making it a test question, as it was one of the leading factors of the political tempest which awaited General Gage when he should return to America as Governor and Captain General of Massachusetts.

The East India Company dated back to the last years of Queen Elizabeth; it had grown by accretion — by absorption of its rivals — from merchant adventurers to the Indies into

a gigantic monopoly of the commerce of the Indian and Pacific Oceans between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. This commercial monopoly, enforced by the Company's armed ships on the high seas, existed by a succession of royal charters running for some twenty years each and renewable at the pleasure of the Crown, with or without change of terms. The two salient conditions on which the monopoly was granted in the royal charter were, first, that the Company should export a certain fixed amount, at the least, of British manufactures, — this in the interest of British manufacturers; second, that all imports from the East by the East India Company, whether from India or China or any other country beyond the Cape of Good Hope, should be sent to London as the distributing centre, paying import duties into the royal treasury before being exported to foreign consuming markets, — this for the interest of all England, not only as a source of revenue, but as making London the commercial and banking capital of Europe by its control of all the trade of the East Indies, upon which the prosperity of Venice, Genoa, Lisbon, and Amsterdam had been built in the past.

This monopoly was immensely profitable; for the forty years previous to 1772 the *gross profits* on the Company's imports had averaged one hundred and twenty per cent of the cost price. But to retain this monopoly in the face of wealthy and dangerous competitors, the Company had long been obliged to expend annually large amounts in bribery. An investigation by Parliament of the Company's books in 1693 showed that £90,000 a year had been regularly paid to men in high political office; in consequence of which the Duke of Leeds was impeached for taking £5000, and the king then immediately prorogued Parliament to prevent a prosecution "in a much higher quarter" for a still larger amount.



But, aside from this blackmail regularly extorted by high officials, the necessities of the Crown in the wars of William and Mary and of Queen Anne became so pressing that the Company's assistance was repeatedly called for; in 1708 the aggregate of the Company's loans to the Crown amounted to £2,000,000; in that year the Company's charter was renewed by Queen Anne's high treasurer; the price paid was an additional loan of £1,200,000 *without interest*, bringing the indebtedness of the Crown to the Company up to £3,200,000, which was to continue until repaid at the convenience of the Government. This was the amount in 1772, and it will readily be understood that the bankruptcy of the East India Company could not be permitted by either the king or Parliament. Hence their joint action in retaining the tea tax and for enforcing the opening of the American market with the whole force of the kingdom; and, when the tea was thrown overboard in Boston, it was something far more than the loss of 343 chests of tea; it was a deliberate defiance of the whole power of king and Parliament, and their answer to the challenge was the Boston Port Bill; to enforce this edict General Gage was sent to Boston and the four regiments—the estimate of force deemed sufficient for its enforcement—arrived in Boston shortly *after* June 1st, when the Port Bill was to go into effect.

General Gage was not alone in deeming four regiments sufficient; Colonel Dalrymple, who was in command at the time of the Boston Massacre, Colonel Grant, who had served in America during the French War and who later served in General Howe's army as one of his major-generals, were of the same opinion in advising the War Department. It seemed to be a very general opinion, in fact certain, that "the Americans would not fight, that they would never dare to face a British army," as Colonel Grant declared in Parliament even as late as February, 1775. We find in

Hutchinson's Diary (I. 461) a curious confirmation not only of this view in 1774, but of the reaction at the War Department when these two "American colonels" claimed that General Gage, with more than twice as many regiments in Boston, could not safely venture outside the town. Hutchinson, under date of May 31, 1775, says that he called upon General Harvey, Military Secretary at the Horse Guards (army headquarters), "where I found Grant and Dalrymple. Harvey swore and reproached them, chiefly Dalrymple, because he wanted more forces. This was his expression:— 'How often have I heard you American colonels boast that with four battalions you would march through America, and now you think Gage with three thousand men and forty pieces of cannon may not venture out of Boston.' He was much heated in talking of the last advices from Boston."

Such were the views at the "Horse Guards"—the War Department—in London on the eve of the arrival of the ship bringing the news of Lexington and Concord; nor were the Administration, the Ministers who advised the king, more wise in their view of the gravity of the situation in America, even at that late hour; for Lord North cheerfully declared in the middle of that same month of May, 1775, that "this American business was not so alarming as it seemed and that everything would no doubt be speedily settled without bloodshed." When that fateful news did come a few days later, London was in consternation scarcely less than Burgoyne's description of what he found on his arrival in Boston on the 25th of May, as he described the feeling of the Loyalists and British officers in his letter to Lord Rochford:

"In all companies, whether of officers or inhabitants,  
"men still lost in a sort of stupefaction which the events  
"of the 19th of April had occasioned, and venting  
"expressions of censure, anger, or despondency."

In fact, neither king, ministry, nor Parliament had intended to force matters to the arbitrament of war; they did not believe it possible that the Americans would face the famed British Regulars in battle. In very truth did the patriot, Sam Adams, as he and Hancock walked across the field from Parson Clark's house at Lexington on the early dawn of that fateful day, rightly describe the firing of the British troops as "the shot that will be heard around the world."

When the news of the destruction of the tea at Boston reached London, everyone was furiously bent on bringing the rebellious colony to her knees, and the leaders to a traitor's doom. Vindictive measures could not be too severe, and Parliament addressed the king, assuring him of its readiness for measures adequate, if possible, to the insulting challenge of Boston. We need not diverge from our line of argument to describe the five Punitive Acts then enacted by Parliament, commencing with the Boston Port Bill; suffice it to say that Massachusetts was to be summarily stripped of every right known to English subjects; and to carry these extreme measures into execution, Parliament urged the king to exert the whole power of the Crown.

General Gage was then in London, recently returned from America on leave of absence after years of service in positions of the highest responsibility, all creditably filled. He assured the king that the other colonies might speak fair words to Massachusetts, but would do nothing to help her in rebellion; and he offered to bring the whole matter to a speedy end with four regiments. "They will be lions," said he to the king, "so long as we are lambs; but, if we take a resolute part, I assure you they will be very meek." And the king took him at his word and sent him to Boston as Governor and Captain General of Massachusetts with full authority to use every soldier in North America, if necessary, to enforce the five Punitive Acts.

Gage's letters to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State for War, very soon indicated a steadily growing appreciation of his misconception of the situation of affairs which faced him on his arrival in Boston Harbor. Though he had sailed in the fast frigate "Lively," arriving on May 13, 1774, in twenty-seven days from Plymouth, the Act shutting up the Port of Boston had reached Boston three days earlier, and a town meeting was already in session to consider it. Gage reports May 19th, "I hear from many that the 'Act' has staggered the most presumptuous," but he adds, "They determined to invite the other colonies to stop all exports and imports to and from Great Britain and Ireland and every part of the West Indies, till the Act should be repealed." (American Archives, I. 333.) The proposal to open the way to an amicable negotiation and settlement of the controversies by a subscription to pay the East India Company for the tea destroyed was almost unanimously voted down in town meeting. There was still a lingering hope of relief through the intercession of General Gage, who strove by every means in his power to obtain a payment for the tea destroyed as a prelude to reconciliation. But the controversy had passed beyond reconciliation; for the people understood that reconciliation on that basis was a recognition of Parliament's right to tax them. Very many urged immediate resort to arms against the insignificant number of troops sent to overawe them; but Samuel Adams, their wise and far-seeing guide, counselled passive resistance and self-control until the other colonies should join them in the struggle now fast verging to a general civil war. Gage faithfully reported to Lord Dartmouth on July 20th his failure to conciliate; that the Provincial leaders rely upon "obtaining their ends by a union of all the colonies; by non-importation, if their demands are not satisfied; and by the assistance of their friends in England and a general clamor of merchants and manufacturers." (American Archives, I. 615.)

This letter indicates that the Provincial leaders were fully advised of the scope and intensity of the commercial crisis in England and were determined not to alleviate it by concessions to the East India Company, whose financial distress was one of the prime factors of that crisis. Probably the colonies in general believed that internal pressure at home — and notably “the general clamor of merchants and manufacturers” on the verge of bankruptcy — would compel England to yield to their demands, provided matters here did not come to actual bloodshed. Probably also General Gage did not dare to assume the responsibility for bloodshed, as it would result in a general civil war throughout America against Great Britain; and it is even more certain that Massachusetts must avoid taking the initiative in shedding blood, as that would alienate the other colonies from assisting her. This was why Adams unceasingly counselled passive resistance, that “patience was the characteristic of a patriot”; and this was the reason why the people of Boston waited, with magnificent self-control, for the other colonies to come to their assistance in their hour of distress. And the other colonies nobly responded and generously sent food and clothing and words of comfort to suffering Boston, whose cause they made their own and gloried in the courage with which Boston faced martyrdom.

No wiser counsel could have been given than that of Sam Adams — “passive resistance and no bloodshed”; and in conformity with it a plan was adopted by the middle of August, 1774, to transfer forcible opposition and violence from the town of Boston to the province outside of Boston, which Gage could not reach without marching his battalions through a hostile country with every prospect of their annihilation. Gage’s letter of August 27, 1774, to Lord Dartmouth states that “by the plan lately adopted forcible opposition and violence are to be transferred from the Town of Boston to the country.

In consequence of the new plan, popular rage has appeared at the extremity of the Province, abetted by Connecticut." He continues his statement of courts closed, of purchase of arms and ammunition, of open threats to attack troops sent against them, and he says, "I apprehend that I shall soon be obliged to march a body of troops, as occasion arises, to preserve peace." (American Archives, I. 744.)

In September General Gage's successive letters are more and more gloomy as to the future, though not a shot has been fired by either party. On September 2d he reports, "Civil government is near its end: the Courts of Justice expiring one after another; the Judges of the Superior Court have come to me in a body to represent the impossibility of carrying on the business of their Court in any part of the Province; that the force there was by far too small to protect them everywhere; and, after all, no juries would swear in." On the 20th of September he reports still more alarming news of military preparation all about Boston: "The country people are exercising in arms in this Province and Connecticut and Rhode Island; and are getting magazines of arms and ammunition in the country, and such artillery as they can procure"; and he reports that the officers of the Crown, deeming it no longer safe for them "in the present distracted state of every part of the Province," have fled to Boston for protection. (American Archives, I. 767 and 785.)

When General Gage arrived at Boston May 13, 1774, there was not a British soldier in the town, and his guard of honor to the old State House, where he was to be proclaimed Governor, was the Independent Corps of Cadets, a militia organization under John Hancock, Lieutenant-colonel. The only Royal troops in the Colonies north of New York City were the 64th Regiment and two companies of Artillery as the garrison of Castle William in Boston Harbor.

The four regiments sent to enforce the obnoxious Punitive

Acts of Parliament were then on their voyage from Ireland, the 4th, 5th, 38th, and 43d Foot, under Colonel Lord Percy; they began to arrive during the last half of June, the first on June 14th, the last with Lord Percy on July 5th; and the fact that the Port Bill was to go into effect on the first day of June, just two weeks before a single battalion arrived, indicates that no serious difficulty was apprehended in its enforcement; in a word, it seems to have been believed that General Gage could, on the certain knowledge of a military force soon to arrive, bring about a reconciliation based upon the payment for the East India Company's tea destroyed, as the prelude of its negotiation; and to this end Gage seems to have most persistently labored. If any man could have succeeded in arranging an amicable reconciliation on this basis—and apparently Gage's instructions were explicit in this direction—General Gage was admirably selected for this duty: urbane and frank, tactful and kindhearted, his record in Canada, in New York, and the only time he had been in Boston, had won for him the public confidence.

But neither Gage nor his superiors in England, apparently, then had any conception of the political condition in Boston, in Massachusetts, in all the other provinces, which had assumed the gravest irritation by the attempt to open the American market, at all hazards, for the East India Company's accumulated stock of tea and thus to relieve its financial distress, which had been a great factor of the commercial crisis in London, on the one hand, and on the other to establish a precedent for colonial taxation by Parliament. But General Gage was not long in Boston before he began to realize how thoroughly in earnest were the people not only of Boston but of all New England; that they were willing to pass through the fires of martyrdom in defence of their political rights; that his "four battalions" were hardly sufficient to hold the town, much less to undertake military operations outside

the town; that Massachusetts had four hundred thousand inhabitants, and of its one hundred thousand men of military age, the great majority were expert in the use of arms and a very large number had seen military service in the French War and were to be reckoned with if the controversy came to bloodshed. He saw, as shown by his reports to Lord Dartmouth already quoted, the storm gathering in intensity and spreading over the whole colonial horizon in spite of all he could do to dissipate it or even check its spread. As Commander-in-chief in America he was obliged to provide for the safety of his troops; he ordered the 59th Regiment from Halifax and the 23d Regiment from New York early in August, and in September began to fortify Boston Neck so as to make the only approach by land impregnable. Finding vigorous military preparations going on throughout the province, militia companies drilling on every village green, committees of correspondence and of safety forming a network of political and military co-operation throughout New England, and some twenty thousand minute-men well organized and drilled, ready to march to Boston at the beat of the drum or the firing of the alarm gun—these warnings of danger could not be ignored, and Gage wrote thus to Lord Dartmouth on September 2, 1774: "As I do not see that the regiment at New York (47th Foot) or part of the 18th at Philadelphia can be of any use where they are, I purpose to order Major-general Haldimand (his second in command) with those corps to this place. I have thought also of sending transports to Quebec for the 10th and 52d Regiments. . . . I mean to avoid any bloody crisis as long as possible, unless forced on it by themselves,—which may happen. . . . Nothing that is said can palliate; conciliation, moderation, reasoning is over; nothing can be done except by forcible means."

Thus, at the end of August, General Gage had six regiments in Boston: Percy's Brigade from Ireland, consisting of the



4th, 5th, 38th, and 43d Regiments, the 23d Regiment from New York and the 59th Regiment from Halifax, not counting the 64th Regiment garrisoning Castle William, and detachments of Artillery. On the 1st of September, an hour before daybreak, he sent a force in boats to seize the province magazine of powder for its militia, situated between Medford and Cambridge, two hundred and fifty half-barrels, which were immediately transferred to Castle William. The seizure was secretly planned and executed without bloodshed, but it set the whole province ablaze; minute-men were mustered at the alarm drum and some twenty thousand are said to have marched for Boston; but before they had come within cannon shot, they were halted by order of the Committee of Safety in accordance with Samuel Adams's watchword, "Patience! no bloodshed," and they peaceably returned home. What an exhibition to the world of self-restraint and disciplined valor, obedience to orders though wild with indignation, was that!

Gage was taking no more than proper military precautions for the safety of his command, and executing his duty with prudence and without bloodshed. Our leaders were likewise acting with commendable prudence in throwing the responsibility for the first bloodshed on the British troops. But this manifestation of a disciplined militia force, ready to fight or retreat at the word of command, decided Gage to order the 47th Regiment and part of the 18th from New York under General Haldimand, his second in command, leaving only five companies of the 18th in charge of government property there, which was not needed in Boston and could not readily be shipped; he also sent ships to bring the 10th and 52d Regiments from Quebec and two companies of the 65th that were at Newfoundland. Thus by the 1st of November he had concentrated at Boston eight entire regiments (exclusive of the 64th garrisoning the Castle) and several detached

companies—practically every available man of the British army in America—leaving only five regiments for garrison duty at Quebec and Montreal and the posts on the Great Lakes and in the southern colonies. In so doing General Gage merits unqualified commendation as Commander-in-chief in America. In November he reports to Lord Dartmouth that, with these reinforcements “I shall be able to form a force of near three thousand men, exclusive of a regiment for the defence of Castle William. . . . We have by various means got provisions sufficient to last the troops here about six months.” Thus the British army in Boston was, at the opening of winter, fully provisioned until the next May and strong enough to hold Boston against a siege, though not strong enough to subdue the populous and martial province of Massachusetts, now armed and ready for resisting any force which might march forth from Boston.

It is true that General Gage had not “brought the whole matter to a speedy end with four regiments,” as he had promised the king in February; nor had he found, as he had assured the king, that the Americans would be “very meek, if we take a resolute part.” And Lord North was no more surprised than General Gage to find in December, 1774, that his own estimate was as utterly wrong when he cheerfully said in April, 1774: “This American business is not so alarming as it seems; everything will speedily be settled without bloodshed.” This same delusion was also shared by Parliament and by all parties in England.

General Gage had soon found that his own estimate and the king’s and Lord North’s and Parliament’s estimate were all wrong; that this American business was far more alarming than he or anyone in England even dreamed, and his very full reports to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State for War, carefully and frankly state the alarming growth of the uprising between May 19th and November 15th; we know his thirteen

letters to Lord Dartmouth in those six months, which are preserved in the American Archives ; but we know not how many more he may have written to others of his majesty's ministers. These official reports should have been sufficient warning of the abyss of civil war, now near at hand, towards which the country was being borne by an irresistible tide of events. Gage's letter of September 2d does credit to his humanity and political judgment as the Governor of Massachusetts, as do his military preparations to protect his army and provide for its defence in Boston until the Home Government should decide whether to abandon its pretensions or to have war. These are his words: "I mean to avoid any bloody crisis as long as possible, unless forced on it by themselves, which may happen. . . . Nothing that is said can palliate: conciliation, moderation, reasoning is over; nothing can be done except by forcible means."

Gage's army was inactive in Boston, not because of the incapacity of its commander or the lack of courage of the troops, rather from imperative necessity while awaiting the Government's decision whether to begin war or not. The only thing to be done was to prepare his army for field operations by brigading his regiments (November 29th), to strengthen the defences of Boston and to preserve the peace of the town *without bloodshed*. And this latter was done to the infinite credit of both the army and the inhabitants; history does not record the slightest disturbance in Boston from the day the Port Bill went into effect in June, though the sufferings of the townspeople were great; even the leading patriots, Hancock and Samuel Adams, Warren and Revere, lived undisturbed at their homes, spoke in town meeting with perfect security of person, and met in secret council without arrest.

In all that concerned providing for wintering his army, 3,000 strong with six months' supplies, and in concentrating at Boston every soldier available in North America, Gage's

conduct was that of a prudent and far-seeing commander-in-chief. But whether he should use his troops to precipitate open war was a political question for the Home Government to decide, upon the facts set forth in his frequent reports to Lord Dartmouth, which we have seen, and doubtless other letters to the Minister for the Colonies which have not been open to the public. General Gage knew perfectly well that the entire British army then in the United Kingdom and Ireland was less than 18,000 strong; and he was now convinced that at least 20,000 men must be the strength of the army in America to have a fair chance to whip the Colonies into submission; he had but 3,000 and he would not be justified in wasting these few without the slightest prospect of success. He also knew that Lord North, in defence of his policy of taxing the American Colonies, estimated their population as 3,000,000 and the population of Great Britain as 8,000,000. Moreover he took into account the abundant food supply of the Colonies and their numerous and hardy population, brought up from childhood to the use of arms in self-defence; and also the fact, perfectly familiar to him as an officer in the French War not then fifteen years past, that Massachusetts had at one time in the field during that war one man out of every three within the military age; and further, that men fighting for their homes and for their dearest rights are unconquerable by men brought across the ocean to fight in a cause which they neither understand nor care for. Knowing these things he, as a soldier, might well pause before assuming the responsibility of precipitating a war which might cost England all her American colonies; while as a civil governor he could not do so without explicit authority from his home government acting with full knowledge of the situation as reported by him.

General Gage was perfectly aware of the strenuous opposition in Parliament to the Punitive Acts, which he had been sent out to enforce: he knew that this opposition was

led by Chatham, England's greatest statesman, and was supported by her unsurpassable orator, Edmund Burke; that Lord Camden and the Earl of Shelburne, in the House of Lords, were as strenuous as Colonel Barré and Governor Johnstone in the Commons in demanding the recall of the troops at Boston and the repeal of everyone of the infamous Punitive Acts. He had reason, therefore, to doubt whether, when the alarming situation in America was fully understood in England, the present vindictive policy would be allowed to stand, *provided always* that no blood had yet been shed. Under such circumstances, to avoid bloodshed till the last moment was clearly his duty as civil governor.

Moreover General Gage had reason to believe that Lord North was at heart opposed to these drastic measures of coercion, though he was dominated into acquiescence by the king and the other ministers; and lastly, that the king himself, in making a test question of the tea tax, neither wished nor expected to push it to actual war; and that the ministry, though worried by the news from America, did not realize that war was already close upon them. They were, however, very uneasy during this critical winter; they were continually appealing to Benjamin Franklin, then commissioner of the Colonies in London, through unofficial channels, to find out whether the Americans might not be satisfied by concessions not galling to England's pride; and actually Franklin did go so far as to write home suggestions (Fiske's *American Revolution*, I. 103) whether, under these circumstances, it might not be better for Massachusetts to indemnify the East India Company for the destruction of their tea as a concession on our part to open the way for general reconciliation. This was precisely what Gage had been laboring to accomplish; and it may safely be assumed that he was privately, if not officially, made cognizant of this desire for reconciliation rather than for war as its alternative. It was a noto-

rious fact, said Governor Johnstone from his seat in the House of Commons on February 1, 1775, that the East India Company had requested the repeal of the tea tax of three pence a pound in America, and had offered their consent that the Government should retain the six pence a pound export tax (already allowed the Company as drawback on shipments of tea to America), provided the tea tax of three pence in America was remitted.

Another incident may be cited on the growing willingness in England to withdraw from its mistaken policy towards America, provided it could do so without too great humiliation to her arrogant pride. It was well known that Lord Howe, who fell at Ticonderoga in 1758, was the popular idol of New England; his elder brother and successor in the peerage was the famous Admiral Howe, who was the selected channel of unofficial communication between the ministry and Benjamin Franklin; his younger brother, Gen. William Howe, was considered perhaps the best general in the British army. General Howe was known as a friend of America; he had won high honor under General Wolfe at Quebec and was beloved in America because of his idolized brother; he was his brother's successor as a member of Parliament and had defended the conduct of the Americans. The choice of General Howe as the senior of the "Three Major-generals" sent to Boston in April, 1775, to assist General Gage at this crisis, in spite of his opposition to the king's avowed policy, seems in full accord with Lord North's saying that he sent "the olive branch with the sword." Howe's appointment to succeed Gage, and Admiral Howe's subsequent appointment to offer terms of reconciliation, indicate a radical change of policy on the part of the Government. But it came too late. Blood had been shed, the Rubicon had been crossed, reconciliation was impossible.

General Gage's policy as outlined in his report of September

2, 1774, to Lord Dartmouth, was of a truth not only the most humane, but the only practicable one possible for allowing time for England to reconsider her improvident and vindictive measures, hastily adopted in a moment of wrath on receiving the news of the destruction of the now historically famous 343 boxes of tea at Boston: "I mean to avoid any bloody crisis as long as possible, unless forced on it by themselves — which may happen." Even though towards the end of that winter he had received peremptory orders from the king's ministers to arrest Samuel Adams and John Hancock and send them to England for trial, he had the moral courage to refuse to obey the command, well knowing that to do so would precipitate that "bloody crisis" which he had so wisely sought to avoid; though he undoubtedly realized that his refusal would cost him his position.

On our side Adams' warning had reached every fireside in Massachusetts; every man, woman, and child was taught the hard lesson of "Patience, no bloodshed yet. Let the British fire the first shot, and *Then*." And the company of "minute men" and the "standing company" of militia in every town waited for that "then": the alarm gun was ready in the shop of the captain of the minute company; the messengers, selected to carry the war cry from town to town, had their horses ready to mount; the town's supply of powder and balls was in readiness in the church by the village green; the companies, drilled on the village green every day, were instructed to know the full significance of the command which had settled the day at Minden and at Quebec: "Wait until the enemy are within forty yards and then all together." Gage knew that to arrest Adams and Hancock would spell that fateful "*Then*" throughout Massachusetts, and he refused to obey even the king's positive order; he manfully refused to take upon his soul the responsibility for the ocean of blood and the rending asunder of the British Empire, which he was

certain would follow. General Gage had gone as far as his conscience would allow in carrying into execution orders which he now realized to be futile, and humanity and his sense of right forbade him to go a step further from sentiments of loyalty or of personal honor. What mattered it to him if he was denounced by future historians, even by such a writer as Bancroft (IV. 8), for "his inactivity, poor in spirit and weak of will, dull in his perceptions and unsettled in his opinions; fit neither to reconcile nor to subdue; inspiring neither confidence nor fear" — at least he would have a clear conscience in his declining years and not sink into the pitiable remorse, so graphically described by the widow of Lord North as the fate of that high minister who sacrificed his conscience to his king.

Let us rather turn to the greatest statesman of England who in 1775 defended General Gage from the obloquy heaped upon him and his army in Boston because they did not accomplish what they then knew and we now know was impossible. I venture to believe that Chatham's defence of General Gage was fully warranted and far juster than Bancroft's belittling estimate of his character.

On December 22, 1774, Chatham introduced in the House of Lords a Resolution for the Recall of the Troops in Boston, in which he defended General Gage as follows :

"The measures last year, which have produced the present  
"alarming state of America, were founded upon misrepresentation : they were violent, precipitate and vindictive.  
"The Nation was told that it was only a small faction in  
"Boston, which opposed all lawful government; that  
"the appearance of the least firmness would awe the  
"Americans into submission. But now, my Lords, we  
"find that, instead of suppressing the faction at Boston  
"these measures have spread it over the whole Continent  
"and have united the whole people by the most insoluble of all bonds — intolerable wrongs. . . . I can  
"not but feel, with the most anxious sensibility, for the



“situation of General Gage and the troops under his  
“command, thinking him, as I do, a man of humanity  
“and understanding, and entertaining, as I ever shall,  
“the highest respect, the warmest love, for the British  
“troops. Their situation is unworthy — penned up,  
“pining in inglorious inactivity. They are an army of  
“impotence; you may call them an army of safety and  
“of guard, but they are in truth an army of impotence  
“and contempt; and, to render the folly equal to the  
“disgrace, they are an army of irritation and vexation!

“But I find a report *creeping* abroad that the ministers  
“censure General Gage’s inactivity. Let *them* censure  
“him; it becomes *their justice* and *their honor!* I do  
“not mean to censure his inactivity; it is a prudent and  
“necessary inaction; but it is a miserable condition,  
“where prudence is a disgrace and where it is necessary  
“to be contemptible.

“His tameness, however disgraceful, cannot be censured;  
“for the first drop of blood, shed in a civil and unnatural  
“war, would be a wound beyond all cure; it would entail  
“hatred and contention between the two people from  
“generation to generation. And, when I hear General  
“Gage censured for inactivity, I must retort with in-  
“dignation on those whose intemperate measures and  
“improvident councils have betrayed him into his present  
“situation.”

Now that a century and a score of years more have passed over the grave of General Gage, now that the “hatred and contention between the two people from generation to generation” have faded into oblivion, I think we well may recognize and honor his meritorious service to both old England and New England, so bravely and conscientiously rendered by General Sir Thomas Gage during the terrible ordeal which brought obloquy upon him at the time, but which he bore with the fearless front of Seneca’s pilot who sang amid the howling tempest, through which the ship was laboring, “Blow high, blow low! I will keep my rudder true!”

General Burgoyne wrote thus of him to Lord Rochford on June 25, 1775:

“I think General Gage possessed of every quality to  
“maintain a quiet government with honor to himself  
“and happiness to those he governs; his temper and his  
“talents, of which he has many, are calculated to dis-  
“pense the offices of justice and humanity.”

To this estimate of General Gage's character we may add our sincere Amen, in view of the justice and humanity manifested by him in many ways towards our forefathers, in the execution of superior orders as repugnant to him as to them. Under ordinary circumstances and conditions of colonial life he would probably have endeared himself to the people of Massachusetts as much as he had made himself beloved by the people of Upper Canada and of New York for his uniform courtesy and kindness of heart, his purity of life and his justice and humanity. But he was the king's governor here at a time when the tide of events was irresistibly making for a historic epoch, which few then could realize in its mighty significance and which no one man could hold back. The best and wisest but saw through a glass dimly in those anxious days; but now, with a longer and a wider perspective, we can judge more correctly and give full credit where it is justly due. Let this be inscribed by us to the memory of General Gage, the last of the royal governors of Massachusetts. “He dispensed the offices of justice and humanity and avoided shedding our blood as long as possible.”

COL. RICHARD GRIDLEY, ENGINEER (1711-1797).

In May, 1775, Col. Richard Gridley was appointed engineer-in-chief of the Massachusetts army besieging Boston; he had no assistants, for William Burbeck, who had been appointed second engineer, was detached to take charge of the Ordnance Department.

Richard Gridley, born in Boston in 1711, was then sixty-four years old; he was of a good colonial family, identified with important events in our colonial history. His elder brother Jeremiah (H. C. 1725), described as a "giant of the law," had shared the honors of the day with James Otis and Oxenbridge Thatcher in 1761, when the great case was argued before the provincial supreme court as to the constitutionality of "Writs of Assistance."

Richard was endowed with uncommon genius, improved by superior education. Learned in every branch of mathematics, inspired by ambition, chivalric honor and adventurous courage, he was a born soldier and, by his resourceful character, peculiarly qualified to become a military engineer. He was designed to be a merchant; but the attempt was soon relinquished and, like Washington, he employed himself as a practical surveyor and civil engineer, devoting his spare time to military science, which he studied with ardor and acquired with facility, until his opportunity for commencing his military career came in 1745, when he was appointed engineer and chief of artillery of the Massachusetts army sent to besiege Louisburg. Under the instruction of the distinguished engineer Bastide, he became famous for the scientific accuracy of his heavy ordnance in the bombardment of Louisburg, which soon reduced it to a capitulation.

For his distinguished services he was commissioned as captain in Shirley's regiment, the 50th Foot, in the British Regular army. When the war was over the regiment was disbanded and Captain Gridley retired on half-pay as an officer.

But peace was of short duration; war with France was soon renewed and when it closed the French had lost their American possessions. In this war Gridley rapidly gained distinction: he was made chief engineer with the rank of colonel in 1755; in 1756 he was chief of artillery in the expedition against Crown

Point, and later he proceeded to Lake George, where he erected fortifications. In 1758 he so greatly distinguished himself at the Siege of Louisburg as to receive the most unusual personal honors from General Amherst, British commander-in-chief in America.

After the capture of Louisburg, General Amherst returned to New York to prepare for the final campaign against the French; he was to proceed with the main army, by way of Lake Champlain against Montreal; General Wolfe, his second in command, by the way of the St. Lawrence against Quebec; Gridley was selected by Wolfe to go with him to Quebec, and he made Gridley chief of the Provincial artillery. His services throughout that campaign were distinguished; and the closing drama on the Heights of Abraham found Gridley at Wolfe's side with two small guns, raised with great difficulty from the river to the heights, which under Gridley's personal command threw discharges of grapeshot, causing great havoc in the French lines. This fact, however, does not seem to have attracted the attention of Parkman in his history of that battle; but it is given on the authority of Knox (in his "Campaign in America"), whose account Parkman recognizes as of authority and generally follows.

In recognition of these valuable services in the field, when the war was over and the army reduced to a peace footing, Colonel Gridley in addition to his half-pay as a British officer was granted the Magdalen Islands in the bay of St. Lawrence with their valuable cod and seal fisheries.

At the opening of the American Revolution, when events indicated probable military operations, Gridley's agent in England, by order of the British Government, inquired of Colonel Gridley which party he would serve; his reply was unequivocal — that "he never drew his sword but in the cause of justice and such he considered his native country's now to be." His half-pay immediately ceased and he had too much spirit to ask for the arrears of his half-pay then due.

Such was the military record of Col. Richard Gridley when he was made chief engineer of the army besieging Boston in May, 1775. Soon after his appointment General Ward ordered Colonel Gridley and Colonel Henshaw, accompanied by Richard Devens of the Committee of Safety, to examine the neighboring country between the Charles and the Mystic rivers; they reported in favor of fortifying Prospect Hill first, Bunker Hill second, and Breed's Hill last. The military topography of this section was by this reconnaissance familiar to our military leaders, when Prescott's force marched to Charlestown on the night of June 16th. Profound mystery hung over this night march until the troops had crossed Charlestown Neck, where they found General Putnam and some two hundred men of his regiment with wagons loaded with intrenching tools, etc., and Colonel Gridley, the chief engineer of the army, to lay out and superintend the works.

The selection of the position on Breed's Hill was the best, for the purpose in view, of any on the peninsula; covering, as it did, our line of communications, with our left covered by the Slough and our right with a redoubt, its exposed face strengthened by a redan to give flank fire. The rapidity with which the Redoubt was raised in four hours leads us to accept the statement that gabions and hogsheads were used, as we know Gridley used them in fortifying Dorchester Heights.

As to his conduct in the battle, we know that he was so severely wounded in the leg that he was carried off the field. This happened near the Rail Fence, after the Redoubt was taken. Nay more, the thorough knowledge of grand tactics, manifested in so skilfully covering our only line of communication and retreat, by establishing the Rail Fence Line a hundred yards in front of the key of the American position, strengthening it by the enfilading fire of Knowlton's Connecticut men and one gun, and holding that line firmly with Stark's and Reed's two regiments, thus concentrating some

eight hundred men echeloned to the left rear of Prescott's force at the Redoubt and Breastwork — these facts mark the presence of a man of high military capacity, of a first-class military engineer. We do not know exactly what proportion of the credit is due to Colonel Gridley; but we do know that he was wounded at that point at the time the Redoubt was carried and had apparently been on supervising duty in that neighborhood all day. As we do not know of any other man so fully qualified by experience and rank in that part of the field, we may, perhaps, be warranted in giving him credit for the principal initiative in thus providing for a safe retreat for our forces.

The fact that, immediately after the battle, Colonel Gridley was made major-general is indicative of their recognition by the Massachusetts Congress of his pre-eminent service on that day.

After being some months disabled for active service by his wound, he returned to Cambridge and superintended the fortifications around Boston; he it was who superintended, as well as planned, the works on Dorchester Heights. It was also due to his mechanical skill and ingenuity that the first iron cannons and mortars were cast in this country.

Washington, impressed with his rare and valuable gifts as a military engineer and ordnance officer, urged him to accompany the army to New York; but his advanced age forbade and he retired on half-pay, though he lived to the age of eighty-six, universally respected as a courtly gentleman as well as a model of military excellence.

*Copies of Unpublished Letters in private Collections of Manuscripts and in the Public Record Office, War Department, obtained in London in 1905 through the kind offices of Hon. Whitelaw Reid, U. S. Ambassador.*

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MEMORANDUM OF THE DARTMOUTH AND OF THE SACKVILLE  
COLLECTIONS OF MSS.

Original Ms. Letters :

- I. GEN<sup>L</sup> HOWE TO GEN<sup>L</sup> HARVEY, Military Secretary at the "Horse Guards," dated Boston, June 12. 1775. [Dartmouth Collection.]
- II. GEN<sup>L</sup> HOWE TO HIS BROTHER, ADM<sup>L</sup> LORD HOWE, dated Boston, June 12. 1775 [Dartmouth Collection.]
- III. LORD HOWE TO LORD GERMAIN, Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated Porters Lodge, July 29. 1775 [Sackville Collection.] enclosing Gen<sup>L</sup> Howe's letter of June 22, 1775 to Lord Howe.
- IV. GEN<sup>L</sup> HOWE TO LORD HOWE, giving his account of the Battle of Bunker Hill, dated Boston, June 22, 1775. [Sackville Collection.]
- V. GEN<sup>L</sup> GAGE TO LORD BARRINGTON, Secretary of State for War, dated Boston, July 21. 1775, enclosing his Report on the Distribution of his Army in America, July 19. 1775 and the State of the Forces at Boston.

[Public Record Office, War Dept.  
Letters — Original Correspondence, Vol. XII]

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MEM<sup>o</sup> — In the above-named Report of General Gage we have the list of the forces in Boston, and in the margin a pencil mem<sup>o</sup> of the rank and file, namely : 17 regts. of Infantry (6,981), 1 regt. of Cavalry (269) ; in addition to which are 5 companies of Artillery (est. 225), 2 bat<sup>ons</sup> Marines (est. 900), the

garrison at Castle William (est. 545); making an aggregate of 8920 rank & file and, if 12% be added for officers & non-com<sup>d</sup> officers, the entire force at & about Boston would be 9.990 officers & men. This force composed of Gage's original army and the two divisions from Ireland, arriving between the middle of June & the middle of July, represents *the maximum force at any time at Boston during the Siege*. This Report, moreover, is more than three month earlier than the earliest Return of Strength appended to Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe's Orderly Book, which was first printed from original manuscripts in the War Office in 1890.

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*Unpublished Letters of Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe in private collections of Mss., copies of which were obtained in London in 1905 through the kindly assistance of Hon. Whitelaw Reid, U. S. Ambassador. The Copies were made by Mr. B. F. Stevens, agent of U. S. Gov<sup>t</sup> in London.*

#### THE DARTMOUTH COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS.

The Dartmouth Collection of Manuscripts is rich in unpublished documents and letters on American affairs, written during Lord Dartmouth's service as Secretary of State for the Colonies. William Legge, 2<sup>d</sup> Earl of Dartmouth [b. 1731, d. 1801], succeeded Lord Hillsborough, as Secretary of State for the Colonies and President of the Board of Trade and Foreign Plantations in Lord North's Cabinet, in 1772 and held those positions until November 1775, when he was appointed Lord Privy Seal. Benjamin Franklin, who as Commissioner in London of several of the American Colonies was much brought in contact with him, says of him: "He is a truly good man and wishes sincerely a good understanding with the Colonies, but does not seem to have strength equal to his wishes." (Life of Franklin, II. 154.) John Fiske (Hist. Amer. Revolution I. 82) likewise says: "Lord Dartmouth succeeded Lord Hillsborough, — an amiable man, but wholly under the influence of the King." It seems the consensus of historians that Franklin's estimate of Lord Dartmouth was



well-founded; but, as for his being wholly under the influence of the King, Lord North and every member of his Cabinet were dominated by the King's will; and the fact that the King was seeking soldiers from Germany and Russia, in the fall of 1775, with whom to carry fire and sword into America, is adequate as a reason for Lord Dartmouth's withdrawal from the Cabinet in November, 1775, because of his known desire for reconciliation with the American Colonies from the beginning of the troubles with them. It was this honest difference of opinion which made his presence in the Cabinet incongruous at a period of hostilities of vindictive character; but that there was no question of his absolute loyalty and patriotism, is evinced by his appointment to the equally honorable and highly-esteemed position of Lord Privy Seal. He continued in this latter office until the downfall of Lord North's Administration in 1782, when he resigned.

By the courtesy of the present Earl of Dartmouth and the kind offices of the Hon. Whitelaw Reid, U. S. Ambassador at the Court of St. James, copies of two very important letters of Sir William Howe, Major General at Boston in June 1775, have been obtained and are hereto appended; they were both written on June 12<sup>th</sup>, the day on which the Council of War at General Gage's Head Quarters in Boston decided upon the plan for a short and sharp campaign to raise the Siege of Boston; which his colleague, Maj. Gen<sup>l</sup> Burgoyne, says was unanimously adopted. In these two letters Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe succinctly states that plan, namely: To take and keep possession of both peninsulas of Dorchester Neck and Charlestown; beginning with Dorchester Neck, as soon as the first division from Ireland (then beginning to arrive) should be landed. It was comprehensive and skillfully devised, after an evidently careful study of the military topography of Boston and of the force presently available for field-operations. Briefly stated, it was to seize Dorchester

Neck — the movements for which are detailed in Gen<sup>l</sup> Burgoyne's letter to Lord Stanley — at daybreak on June 18<sup>th</sup>, with Howe's and Clinton's Divisions; then, leaving a small force to intrench there, to push thence to Roxbury with those two divisions, Gen<sup>l</sup> Burgoyne cannonading Roxbury from Boston Neck; leaving a sufficient force to hold and intrench that position, thence "to go over with all we can muster to Charles Town Height; . . . and either attack the Rebels at Cambridge; or perhaps, if the country admits of it, endeavor to turn that post." The Americans, informed of this plan, occupied Charlestown on the night of June 16<sup>th</sup> to divert the British from seizing Dorchester on June 18<sup>th</sup>: this compelled the British to change their plan and attack Charlestown first; and, apparently, expecting no serious opposition there, to carry out the plan of proceeding thence at once to attack Cambridge, leaving Dorchester to be taken later.

For these reasons these two letters of Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe — one to Gen<sup>l</sup> Harvey, Military Secretary at the "Horse Guards" (Army Head Quarters), the other to Adm<sup>l</sup> Lord Howe, his brother, — are of great historical value in studying the real objective of the Battle of Bunker Hill.

#### THE SACKVILLE COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS.

The Sackville Collection of Manuscripts, belonging to Mrs. Stopford-Sackville, contains the letter of Adm<sup>l</sup> Lord Howe of July 29, 1775 to Lord George Germain, enclosing Gen<sup>l</sup> Sir William Howe's letter to his brother (Lord Howe) of June 22, 1775, giving his account of the Battle of Bunker Hill, — stating not only the number of his forces but the tactical reasons for his plan of attack. It should be observed that Lord Howe refers to "the incorrect relation of the action published in the Gazette"; and that he says of Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe's account that he thinks that it "will enable your Lordship

to form a more satisfactory opinion of the abilities of the Rebel Commanders." The two letters in the Dartmouth Collection of Manuscripts and the third in the Sackville Collection do infinite credit to Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe for their thorough military ability and fairness to that of his opponents; in them he states the exact forces at his disposal and their inability to advance beyond the immediate vicinity of Boston. He frankly states his opinion, as a soldier of experience, that the Army in America should be increased to at least 19,000 rank and file (to which 12% should be added for officers etc. making 23,000 in all), of which 12,000 should be sent to the Hudson and 3500 to the Connecticut Vallies, leaving 3500 as garrison at Boston and its outlying posts; and he indicates how that may be done.

This valuable Collection of Manuscripts, — for permission to copy the above letters of Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe of June 22, 1775 and of Lord Howe of July 29, 1775 the Bunker Hill Monument Association is greatly indebted to the courtesy of Mrs. Stopford-Sackville, — was apparently begun by Lord George Germain, who in November 1775 succeeded Lord Dartmouth as Secretary of State for the Colonies, a position filled by him from that time until the downfall of Lord North's cabinet in 1782. It may be observed that he was known by his family name — Lord George Sackville [b. 1716, d. 1785], 3<sup>d</sup> son of Lionel Cranfield Sackville, Duke of Dorset — until 1770, when by Act of Parliament he was authorized to change his name to Lord George Germain, to inherit a valuable estate under the will of Mrs. Betty Germain: that from 1770 to 1782 he is known, in the history of those stirring times, as Lord George Germain: that in 1782 he was made by the King Viscount Sackville, thus resuming his family name. For these reasons the Collection of Manuscripts, begun by him and now owned by Mrs. Stopford Sackville, is properly called "The Sackville Collection."

*Copies of unpublished manuscripts in regard to the Battle of Bunker Hill obtained in London in 1905 from private Collections.*

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I. GEN<sup>L</sup> HOWE TO GEN<sup>L</sup> HARVEY, DATED BOSTON JUNE 12, 1775 (FROM LORD DARTMOUTH'S MSS.).

The Situation, which the Enemy has taken in Forming the Blockade, is Judicious & Strong, being well Intrenched where the Situation Requires it & with Cannon.

Their numbers are Great, Exclusive of Every Inhabitant Around coming to Join that part of The Army that may be attacked, upon the Alarm being Given. They come from far & near, and the Longer The Action may last, The Greater their Numbers Grow.

Their mode of Engaging is (Like all other Inhabitants of a strong Country) by Getting behind fences & Every Sort of Covering, firing from thence; then Retire & Load under Cover & Return to the Charge, or take another Safe Situation, from whence they fire.

The Country for 30 miles Round is amazingly well Situated for their manner of fighting, being Covered with woods & small Stone Wall Enclosures, Exceedingly uneven & much cutt with Ravins.

The Position of The Blockade is with their Right att Dorchester; with Post of Communication to Roxbury, where they are in force, continue by Posts to Cambridge, The Head Quarters, where they are Intrenched, from thence They Cross The Mystick to Winnismyck, & to Chelsea their Left. In this State The General has not thought it prudent to Attack them, nor to Extend himself upon the Heights of Dorchester Neck, or Charles Town; which two Positions I Profess to

think he should have been Master of, on the Rebels first appearance, because he could hold them both without the Least Risk.

The Latter is Entirely Commanded by a height on our side of the River, and has not been possest by Either Party. Upon Dorchester Neck they have a Small Force, which may be Drove from it att any time.

The Post of Roxbury shou'd also have been Seized att the sametime, & an Entrenchment thrown up to preserve it.

The Reasons against all this were certainly cogent, apprehending a General Insurrection of the Inhabitants of The Town, to the amount of 6 or 7000, with an Intention of Massacring the Garrison, which is firmly believed to have been their intention.

In our present State, all warlike Preparations are wanting. No Survey of The adjacent country, no *proper* boats for Landing Troops — not a sufficient number of Horses for The Artillery, nor for Regimental baggage. No Forage, Either Hay or Corn of any Consequence. No Waggon or Harness for Horses, except some prepared by Colonel Cleveland for The Artillery. No Fascines, or Pickets. The Military Chest at the Lowest Ebb, about three or four Thousand only Remaining, which Goes fast for the subsistence of The Troops.

The Rebellious Colonys will supply nothing. Some of these articles will, I hope, be furnished from Quebec, but unless Government Enters heartily into the wants here, by Immediately Sending all the supplys wanting, particularly for the winter, The Army will do themselves Little Service. Flat boats are much wanted.

Our Intelligence is So Scanty, that what we Get from the Inland Country for the most part is sent to The General by the Rebels. Very few or no Spies. We are therefore Entirely Ignorant of what they are about in the Neighbourhood.

I now come to my Ideas of Acting here, with the force we shall have, including only the 3 Batt<sup>ns</sup> of the first Division from Ireland.

In the first place, I wou'd possess Dorchester Neck placing a Redoubt or more upon it; & from thence, *If found Practicable upon the Spot* attack the Post of Roxbury, being at the Same time attacked from the Neck of the Town. Keep possession of Roxbury by an Intrenchment for a couple of hundred men. Then carry all the Force (to be collected) over to Charles Town Height, & Either attack Cambridge, or If more advisable upon reconnoitring the Situation, turn it. In either case, I shou'd apprehend, the Rebels wou'd Quit it. We should then take possession & probably not proceed much further before The Arrival of The *four* Battalions.

Even then we shall find it Difficult to keep up a sure Communication with this Town, Shou'd we proceed further into the Country.

Upon this Sketch you will see that I have no hopes of Doing much this Campaign.

An Increase of Fleet I sho<sup>d</sup> Judge Absolutely necessary to keep back all Supplys of Provisions &c by Sea and I wou'd change the Plan of operations Entirely in this war.

Instead of attacking with an army from hence, a corps of Troops consisting of 12,000 *Rank & File* shoud be sent with *full powers* to New York, to act upon The Hudson's River and back of this Province, with a Corps of Canadians, & Indians attending upon it, & Two Reg<sup>ts</sup> of Light Dragoons. Another army of 3500 to act upon the Connecticut River, and an equal number to Garrison this Town & Environs. With this force of 19,000 Rank & File, an End to this (now formidable) Rebellion might take place in one Campaign.

Pray observe that the Month of October, & the greatest part of *November*, is an Exceeding good Season for being in the Field in this Country. With a Less Force than I have

mentioned, I apprehend This war may be spun out until England shall be heartily sick of it.

To produce this force of 19,000 men, The 20 Battalions we shall have here sho<sup>d</sup> be augmented with the utmost Dispatch to about 600 each, Rank & File, which woud produce the numbers the first named army, proposed for New York.

The Increase shou'd be 24 men p<sup>r</sup> company.

Three Battalions of Guards at the same numbers.

Ten Battalions from Ireland — same.

With two Battalions from the West Indies wou'd make the whole number wanted.

Volunteers from the Militia should be had for this Reinforcement, to be enlisted only for the time this service may last, & the Promise of being carried home when The Service is att an End.

As many Recruits & Draughts as cou'd be had might be taken on the same terms of Encouragement. If Fewer Reg<sup>ts</sup> for this Service, then in course the number of men to each company must be Encreased & wou'd not be too high for the number of officers upon the Establishment.

Every Transport coming out to bring a flat boat of Rather a Lesser construction than those used Last War, as they wou'd be stronger & bear the motion of the Ship better.

We are in great need of Medium 12-P<sup>rs</sup> & another Battalion of Artillery cou'd be well disposed of.

12<sup>th</sup> June 1775.

R. 18<sup>th</sup>

II. GEN<sup>l</sup> HOWE TO LORD HOWE, DATED BOSTON, JUNE 12, 1775 (LORD DARTMOUTH MSS.).

[ENDORSED — “GEN<sup>l</sup> HOWE TO LORD HOWE.”]

BOSTON, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1775.

In consequence of the defection at New York, a Frigate has been sent to bring the 4 Regiments destined for that Province to this Port. In the present State of New York, they would be incapable of rendering any Service there for want of due

support from the civil power. Nor would they be competent for acting to any purpose upon the Hudsons River. Tho' if, with their assistance, the General should have an opportunity to strike a vigorous Stroke against the Rebels of these Provinces and rout them, it may create such a change in favor of Government as may render it expedient to send those Regiments back to New York. In the mean time our Force being much too small for the reduction of the Rebels in these provinces, the presence of those 4 Regiments will be necessary here.

The situation of the Rebels for continuing the Blockade of this Town, is exceedingly strong: Being well entrenched in parts, with Cannon in abundance. Their numbers are great; exclusive of the Inhabitants in the Country from 20 to 30 miles round, which can be brought into the assistance of either part of the Army that may be attacked, by an Alarm given and extended far & near throughout the Country. Whence, the longer the Action may last, the greater will be the numbers collected in their support.

Their mode of fighting is, by getting behind Stone Walls or any other covering, giving their fire from thence & retiring to load; and then returning to renew the attack as before: the country being as well adapted to their mode of engaging, as any I have ever seen. It is well-wooded; is extremely uneven, and much enclosed & cut with Ravins.

The Rebels are posted with their Right at Dorchester, where they are not in force, directly. But have posts of communication to Roxbury, where they have Cannons & are numerous. From thence they extend by posts to Cambridge their Head Quarters, where they are intrenched. They continue on crossing the River Mystick, to Winnisimmit; and on to Chelsea which terminates their Left.

We have the misfortune to be unprovided in many essential particulars. No survey of the adjacent Country. No proper



Boats for landing Troops; Nor Horses sufficient, for the Artillery or Baggage of the Regiments. No Forage, either Hay or Corn, of any consequence. And without a proper Quantity of Horse-Harness. Salt provisions very Short. No fassines or Picketts; and the Military Chest at the lowest ebb; Not having more than barely for the Subsistence of the Troops. The rebellious Colonies will not grant us any supplies. Some of the deficient Articles may be furnished from Quebec. But unless the prosecution of this business is heartily pursued by sending out the requisite Aids immediately, and particularly Flat-Boats, we shall do little Service. Our force, in the first place, is much too small. The fighting men, or Rank & File, we have here now amount to about 3,400. The 3 Battalions making the first Division from Ireland, are coming into the Harbour; and may give us 1,100 in addition, which makes 4,500. Out of these, not less than 1,200 can remain for the Garrison of the Town. In this computation the Marines are included; but not the Artillery & Detachments from the Line doing duty with them.

Our intelligence comes, the most part, from the Rebels. We hear G: Carelton is upon his march to retake the Fort of Ticonderoga which the Rebels took by surprize with a detachment they sent from their Army soon after they posted themselves round this Town. They then proceeded down Lake Champlain & took an armed Sloop at St Johns; But were soon after repulsed with loss by a few Regulars from Montreal & a body of Canadians, tho' I think they took the Sloop back with them. Upon intelligence of Gen: Carelton's March, the N: Yorkists have sent a reinforcement to their Friends upon Lake George, who it is said, have quitted the Fort & taken post at the South End of the Lake and upon South Bay. Which positions they mean to maintain; but from which Carelton will presently drive them.

My ideas of the measures we may be able to take in our present situation are — First to possess Dorchester-Neck by two Redoubts. And from thence, *if found practicable* without much risk, to attack the post of Roxbury, from that Neck as well as the Town Neck. To entrench a couple of hundred men there, which would, I imagine, effectually secure the Town from surprize on that side. I would then go over with all we can muster to Charles Town Height, which is entirely commanded from Boston as I said before ; and either attack the Rebels at Cambridge ; or perhaps, if the Country admits of it, endeavor to turn that post, which, judging by appearances from the heights around this Town, seems most advisable.

In either case, I suppose the Rebels will move from Cambridge, And that we shall take, and keep possession of it. But I much doubt whether we shall be able to pass farther into the Country before the arrival of the four Battalions from Ireland, and even then we shall find it difficult to keep up a communication with this place, should we proceed much farther. This last reinforcement will add about 1,500 fighting men to our Strength. But the benefit likely to attend a determination to move on with this force, would be trifling ; exclusive of the risk of meeting with continual checks upon our communication from the innumerable enemies we should be to combat with, and their mode of engaging by which we should lose Men every day. And tho' they should lose double our number which is not by any means to be expected, the advantage in the End would be greatly in their favor.

From this sketch, you will see that I have no great hopes that we shall be able to do much this campaign with the Strength we shall have. We are in great want of Frigates as well as Seamen. The Frigates properly stationed might incommode these Northern Colonies exceedingly, by preventing any supplies of provisions, & of Flour particularly,

being brought to them. This plan would distress them more than the double of our Army would be able to do, whilst the communication is open to them through the Province of N: York. It is my opinion that an Army in that Province with a sufficient Garrison in this Town for the protection of the Fleet, and Cruizers in sufficient number properly stationed, would sooner reduce these four provinces than *any army* could do that was to act from hence.

An Army of about 12,000 fighting Men (Rank & File) should be appointed for that province; with Artillery in proportion and one or two Regiments of Light Dragoons. Another corps of about 3,500, should act in the South parts upon Connecticut River; and an equal number be provided for the Garrison of this Town & necessary posts to be occupied for it's defence.

With this force of 19,000 Rank & File, an End I think might be expected to be put to this Rebellion in one campaign. With less — I apprehend, the contest may be spun out by these people until G. Britain is heartily weary of the Business.

To furnish that addition, the 20 Battalions, including Marines, which we shall have when the second Division arrives from Ireland, should be augmented with the utmost dispatch to 600 each, Rank & File. This would furnish the first mentioned Army for New York, the increase should be, about 24 men p<sup>r</sup> Company.

Three Battalions of Guards, with seven from Ireland, each augmented to the same numbers; and two Batt<sup>lms</sup> from the West Indies, would complete the requisite Force.

Volunteers from the Militia should be received for this reinforcement: to be enlisted only for this province, with an assurance of being reconveyed to England when the Service was accomplished. As many Recruits & Draughts as could be had, might be taken upon the same terms. If fewer

Regiments are chosen, the Compliments of each should be encreased in proportion.

Every Transport sent out, should bring a Flat-Boat; Not quite so large in dimensions as those used in the late War. By being reduced in a small proportion, they would become so much the Stronger, & thence the more servicable."

III. LORD HOWE TO LORD GERMAIN, DATED PORTER'S LODGE, JULY 29, 1775, ENCLOSING COPY OF GEN.<sup>l</sup> HOWE'S LETTER, DATED CHARLESTOWN HEIGHTS, JUNE 22, 1775 (MSS. OF MRS. STOPFORD SACKVILLE).

PORTER'S LODGE, July 29, 1775.

MY LORD:

Having been in Town since Tuesday evening in consequence of fresh letters from Gen: Howe by the Cerberus, I had not the honor of your Lordship's letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> until my return here this morning.

The confidential manner in which you do me the honor to express your sentiments on the important concern now depending, and the incorrect relation of the action published in the Gazette, have induced me to trouble your Lordship with Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe's account of it; which I think will enable your Lordship to form a more satisfactory opinion of the Abilities of the Rebel Commanders.

Most of the particulars, I have reason to suppose, have been communicated to Government from a similar relation, by another channel. But I fear, without the effect to be hoped for. As from some discourse I had with the Secretary at War, I suspect that instead of the active measures your Lordship may think the Crisis demands, a languid Idea of withdrawing the Troops from Boston may prevail, on the principle of difficulty to furnish Recruits in the required extent, for the proposed Reinforcement suggested in my Brother's former Letter. Frigates in abundance are to be forwarded for the

American Service. The unfortunate defection of the Shipwrights at this season, will probably retard the progress of their equipment. But I presume to think the efforts of Ships of War alone, will operate little indeed to recover our dominion over the rebellious Colonies, if the other part of the General's plan is disregarded.

Your Lordship will not have been prepared, perhaps, for such a change of System. But if a more reputable plan is adopted, the time grows short for resolving, procuring and conveying the necessary supplies, in support of the detached Corps now separated from all communication with Boston, except by Sea; And which, if there is similar skill in the Leaders to conduct the Forces occupying the *judicious* post taken two miles in their front, will be the object of the united efforts of their enemies to displace.

General Howe will receive great satisfaction from the knowledge of your Lordship's obliging sentiments, with which I shall acquaint him by the earliest conveyance. And it will be with equal pleasure that I shall embrace every opportunity to testify the perfect consideration & respect with which I have the honor to be

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble serv<sup>t</sup>

HOWE.

IV. GEN<sup>l</sup> HOWE TO LORD HOWE, JUNE 22, 1775, FORWARDED TO LORD GERMAIN JULY 29, 1775 (MSS. COLLECTION OF MRS. STOPFORD SACKVILLE, ENDORSED — "GEN<sup>l</sup> HOWE TO LORD HOWE).

CAMP UPON THE HEIGHTS OF CHARLES TOWN,  
22 June, 1775.

In my last of the 13<sup>th</sup>, I mentioned the Gen<sup>l</sup>'s intentions of occupying Dorchester Neck or Charlestown Heights. And it was determined that the former should be seized, as on Sunday last, the 18<sup>th</sup>, at daybreak; the tide serving well for that time.

Everything was prepared accordingly. But on the 17<sup>th</sup> at daybreak the Rebels were observed at work in great numbers upon these Heights, about 1,500 yards from the Battery mentioned in my last as commanding these Heights from the town of Boston. And it was plainly to be seen that they had thrown up a Redoubt in the night, from whence they could annoy the shipping in the Harbour by placing Cannon in it, covered from the Battery by an Epaulment. This work was no sooner observed, than it was determined they must be removed from thence, as soon as the Troops & Boats could be got in readiness for that purpose. And as the shoar where it was judged most proper to land was very flat, the Landing would not be made with facility after the tide of Ebb was much run off. It was therefore necessary that no delay should be made in our proceeding, since it would be High Water at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. At about that time the Landing was effected without opposition; the Lively, Glasgow & Faulcon; an armed transport, armed sloop and five floating Boat-Batteries being stationed for the Service which they executed very effectually. The Troops we could land together at one disembarcation, in our number & species of Boats (not one of our old accustomed Flat Boats among them), were not more than 1100 Rank & File, composed of 10 comp<sup>les</sup> of Light Infantry; ten of Grenadiers, with the 5<sup>th</sup> & 38<sup>th</sup> Batt<sup>lions</sup>; the second Body which landed quickly after were the 43 & 52 Batt<sup>lions</sup>, making about 450 addition to the former. With these followed some field Artillery. I went on shoar with Gen<sup>l</sup> Pigott, and formed by little Corps in 3 lines, upon a rising spot about 100 yards from the Beach. On the first view it was clearly seen that the Rebels were in force & strongly entrenched upon their Right, in the Redoubt that had been seen from the town at Day-break; with cannon, and with a large Body of Troops posted in the Houses of Charles Town about 200 yards distant from the Right of the Redoubt;

their Left & Centre were covered by a Breast-work (a part of it cannon proof) which extended from the Redoubt to the Mystick, the open space from the Redoubt to that River being about 380 yd<sup>s</sup>; and the whole extent they occupied about 600 yd<sup>s</sup>; the Left of their Line was about 800 yards from our Army where we first landed.

From this appearance, as well as our observation that they were assembling with all the Force they could collect, I applied to Gen<sup>l</sup> Gage for a Reinforcement of Troops. This he immediately complied w<sup>th</sup> by sending the companies of Light Infantry & Grenadiers remaining at Boston. With the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment & 1<sup>st</sup> Batt<sup>n</sup> of Marines. My strength with this addition amounted to abt 2,200 Rank & File, formed on *two* Lines; B. G<sup>l</sup> Pigott commanding on the Left.

We began the attack by a sharp cannonade from our field pieces & 2 Howitzers, the Lines advancing slowly & frequently Halting to give time for the Artillery to fire; the Light Infantry on the Right were directed to keep along the Beach (Shoar of the Mystick) and to force the Left point of the Rebels Breastwork, and then to take them in Flank: the Grenadiers were directed to attack the left of the Rebel Line in front; supported by the 5<sup>th</sup> & 52<sup>d</sup> Regiments. These orders were executed with great perseverance: The Rebels by their great superiority of numbers, keeping up a heavy fire as soon as the Line was advanced within distance of their shot.

The intermediate space between the two Armies was cut by fences, formed of strong posts & close railing, very high, & which could not be broken readily. Had they not been in our way, the Rebels would have been quickly forced upon their Left, without any great loss on our Side. Upon our Left Pigot met with the same obstructions in his advance to the attack of the Redoubt: as well as from the Troops in the Town, which last alone would have given him sufficient employment, had it not been set on fire by order, at this critical time with a carcass from the Battery upon the Town Hill at

Boston. And he carried the Redoubt in a very handsome manner, at the *second* onset; tho' it was most obstinately defended to the last; thirty of the Rebels having been killed by Bayonets within it.

It was my opinion that the defeat of the Rebels would be ensured by the success of either of the two attacks. The carrying of the Redoubt needs nothing more to be said of it, but that the spot on which it was placed commanded all around it. And if the attack of the Right had succeeded, the Rebels in the Redoubt would have been turned. But tho' at length when we succeeded in both, the Soldiers were so much exhausted; And there were so many Officers lost, that the pursuit was followed with all the vigor that might be expected.

(The loss of Officers & Men, the numbers as in the printed sheet.)

My Corps is now encamped upon these Heights, in a very strong Situation, with 3 respectable Redoubts, and without the least Apprehension of being attacked. But I much doubt whether we shall get much further this campaign: the Rebels, on this side, having entrenched themselves very judiciously about 2 miles in our Front; on the Roxbury side, they have done the same. I may therefore safely predict, that with our present Force, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division from Ireland not being yet arrived, we shall not do more than to possess these Heights, & the Dorchester Neck, w<sup>ch</sup> Gen: Clinton will take possession of, either to morrow or on Saturday.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Diary of Lieutenant John Barker of the 4<sup>th</sup>, or "King's Own" Regiment, throws much light upon this proposed attempt to seize Dorchester Neck. He writes thus: —

"June 23<sup>d</sup>" [Thursday] — Great talk of some expedition to-morrow; the 63<sup>d</sup> regt. and 2<sup>d</sup> marines being ordered to Boston and the flank companies of the 64<sup>th</sup> from the Castle.

"June 24" [Friday] — The expedition talked of was to attack Dorchester Hill and was to leave to-day at 6 o'clock in the morning. All the troops on this side [*i.e.* Charlestown] were drawn out and paraded on the Hill [*i.e.* Bunker Hill] and some marched into the road; this was to alarm the Rebels and keep off their attention [*i.e.* from Dorchester]. But soon after we heard it was put off, the General hearing they [*i.e.* the Provincials] had got intelligence and had reinforced that place with 4000 men."



[Marked — "*Unpublished Ms., Public Record Office, War Office ; in "Letters, Original correspondence," Vol. XII.*"]

V — GEN<sup>L</sup> GAGE TO LORD BARRINGTON, SECRETARY AT WAR,  
DATED BOSTON JULY 21, 1775.

(Mss. Pub. Rec. Office)

[endorsed — "Distribution of His Majesty's Forces in North America, by  
G. Gage's 21 July" ]

BOSTON JULY 21<sup>st</sup> 1775.

MY LORD :

I have the honor to Transmit your Lordship a General Return of his Majesty's Forces in North America, for the Month of May, a List of the Garrison Staffs, and a Return of Officers attending the Forces in North America.

Your Lordship will also receive by this Occasion, a Distribution of his Majesty's Forces in North America, and a State of his Forces at Boston

I have the Honor to be with the greatest Regard, Respect, and Esteem, My Lord, your Lordships most Obedient and most humble Servant,

THO<sup>S</sup> GAGE.

Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> Lord Viscount Barrington,  
his Majesty's Secretary at War.

Mem<sup>o</sup> June 17, 1907.

There were five enclosures transmitted with the above letter. As appears by the pencil endorsement (on the annexed copy), the only enclosure now found is the appended Report of the "Distribution of Forces," July 19, 1775. Against each regiment at Boston, in this Report, is marked "*in Pencil*" a mem<sup>o</sup> of the number of its Rank and File, apparently copied from the Report of the "State of the Forces at Boston" at that date. The aggregate of these regimental effectives is as follows:— 17<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons = 269: the 14 regiments of Foot = 6,981; making a total force at Boston of 7,250 Infantry & Cavalry. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Marines, belonging to the Naval Forces, may be estimated at 900 rank & File, but are not included, nor are the 64<sup>th</sup> Regt and 95 men of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regt at Castle William, say 545 more, nor the 5 Companies of Artillery, say 225: this makes Gage's entire force in Boston & Castle William 8,920 men of the Rank & File, exclusive of officers, non-com<sup>d</sup> officers & drummers (12% = 1,070). Total = 9,990.

[Only this one enclosure is now found]

DISTRIBUTION OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES IN NORTH AMERICA,  
19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1775.

REGIMENTS	COMP <sup>YS</sup>	WHERE QUARTERED		[THUS IN PENCIL ON THE DOCUMENT]	
Royal Reg <sup>t</sup> of Artillery	5	At Boston	{ 1 at Montreal & Lakes, 1 at Quebec, 1 at East & West Florida.		
17 <sup>th</sup> L. Dragoons	.....	At Ditto	.....	269	
4 <sup>th</sup> Foot	10	At Ditto	.....	442	
5 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	436	
10 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	408	
18 <sup>th</sup>	8	At Ditto	2 at Kaskaskias Illinois Country	367—76=	291
22 <sup>nd</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
23 <sup>d</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	407	
35 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
40 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
43 <sup>d</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	404	
44 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
45 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
47 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	396	
49 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
52 <sup>nd</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	396	
59 <sup>th</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	333	
63 <sup>d</sup>	10	At Ditto	.....	457	
65 <sup>th</sup>	6	At Ditto	{ 3 at Halifax Nova Scotia, 1 at St. John's & Placentia.	421—152=	269
1 <sup>st</sup> Batt <sup>n</sup> Marines	10	At Ditto	.....		
2 <sup>nd</sup> do	10	At Ditto	.....		
7 <sup>th</sup> Foot	10	.....	At Quebec.		
8 <sup>th</sup>	10	.....	{ 4 at Niagara, 3 at Detroit, 2 at Mi- chillimackinac, 1 at Oswegatchie.		
14 <sup>th</sup>	10	.....	{ 9 at St. Augustine, a detachment of 100 men ordered to Georgia 1 and a Detach <sup>t</sup> of 70 Men & the Comp <sup>y</sup> at New Providence or- dered to Virginia and a Detach <sup>t</sup> of 1 Drum <sup>r</sup> & 95 Rank & File at Castle Wm.		
16 <sup>th</sup>	10	.....	At Pensacola.		
26 <sup>th</sup>	10	.....	{ 9 at Montreal, Small Detachments at Three Rivers, Chamble & St. John's, 1 Taken by the Rebels at Ticonderoga.		
64 <sup>th</sup>	10	.....	At Castle William.		

THO<sup>S</sup> GAGECOMM<sup>DR</sup> IN CHIEF

EXTRACTS FROM GEN<sup>L</sup> BURGOYNE'S LETTERS, WRITTEN IN  
BOSTON IN 1775.

The letters of Gen<sup>L</sup> Burgoyne written in Boston to his nephew, Lord Stanley, and to the Earl of Rochford and to Lord George Germain, successively Secretaries of State for the Colonies, are of rare value as contemporary evidence of the military condition of affairs in Boston both immediately before and immediately after the Battle of Bunker Hill; while his vivid account of the Battle and his conclusions as a military expert, as to the conduct of the Battle—on both the British and American sides—possess a great historical importance.

Extracts from the following letters are hereto appended :

- I. Gen<sup>L</sup> Burgoyne to Earl of Rochford — Boston, June 22, 1775.
- II. Gen<sup>L</sup> Burgoyne to Lord Stanley — Boston, June 25, 1775.
- III. Gen<sup>L</sup> Burgoyne to Lord George Germain — Boston, Aug. 20, 1775.

I. GEN<sup>l</sup> BURGOYNE TO EARL OF ROCHFORD, SECRETARY OF  
STATE FOR THE SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT, JUNE 22, 1775.

I arrived at Boston, together with generals Howe and Clinton, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May. It would be unnecessary, were it possible, to describe our surprise or other feelings upon the appearances which at once and on every side were offered to our observation. . . . In all companies, whether of officers or inhabitants, men lost in a sort of stupefaction, which the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April had occasioned, and venting expressions of censure, anger, or despondency. . . . The news of this miscarriage, aggravated with misrepresentation and inflammatory suggestions, were dispersed — it is incredible how swiftly — from one end of the continent to the other. . . . From the neighbouring Provinces reinforcements flocked to the victorious insurgents by thousands a day. . . .

The sentiments of Howe, Clinton and myself have been unanimous from the beginning. We have alike endeavored to palliate past omissions; to conceal present irremediable wants; to press vigorous undertakings. At the same time, we have been obliged in justice to acknowledge that the reasons for waiting to the last moment for the expected reinforcements which were known to be near, were justly founded. At the time when the exigencies above stated had nearly reached their consummation, the troops of the first embarkation happily arrived. The effect upon the Spirits of the Army was visible. Nevertheless, the proceeding of the enemy did not manifest any intimidation on their part: they pushed their work on both sides of the Town with double diligence. We lost no time in preparation; and, on the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, Gen<sup>l</sup> Howe was detached with a considerable corps to attack on the Heights of Charlestown. . . . And I now congratulate you, my dear

Lord, upon an event that effaces the Stain of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. . . . In this point of view the action is honorable in itself; and whatever measures his Majesty's councils may now pursue, it must be of important assistance by the impression it will make not only in America, but universally upon public opinion. It may be wise policy to support this impression to the utmost, both in writing and discourse. But when I withdraw the curtain, your Lordship will find much cause for present reflection, much for the exercise of your judgement, upon the future conduct of the scene.

Turn your eyes first, my Lord, to the behavior of the enemy. The defence was well conceived and obstinately maintained: the Retreat was no rout; it was even covered with bravery and military skill; and proceeded no farther than the next hill, where a new post was taken, new intrenchments instantly begun and, their numbers affording constant reliefs, they have been continued day and night ever since.

View now, my Lord, the side of Victory and first the list of killed & wounded. . . . The men in *all* the corps having twice felt their enemy to be more formidable than they expected, it will require some training under such generals as Howe and Clinton before they can prudently be intrusted in many exploits against such odds as the conduct and spirit of the leaders enabled them in this instance to overcome. But suppose that point of confidence in the troops attained. Look, my Lord, upon the Country near Boston;—it is all fortification. Driven from one hill, you will see the enemy continually retrenched upon the next; and every step we move must be the slow step of a Siege. . . . When the four batallions of the Second Embarcation arrive and such of the wounded men as we may expect speedily to recover have joined their regiments, our Army will consist of 5,200 effective men, exclusive of officers. If you, in England, reckon upon more, you are mistaken. With this force, and perhaps before it all arrives,

we cannot fail possessing the whole peninsula South of Boston, called Dorchester Neck. It is proposed afterwards to fortify it with redoubts. To occupy this ground when so fortified, on the one side; the Heights of Charlestown, on the other; and the Lines and other works of Boston, in the Centre;—will take, in the opinion of our best officers, upwards of 3000 men. I will suppose, therefore, about 2000 left to be employed upon expeditions: I would embark this force and unite to it all the ships of war that can safely be spared from the protection of Boston. . . .

If the Continent is to be subdued by arms, . . . I speak the sentiments of those who know America best, that you can have no probable prospect of bringing the war to a speedy conclusion with any force that Great Britain and Ireland can supply. A large army of such foreign troops<sup>1</sup> as might be hired, to begin operation up the Hudson River; another army composed partly of old disciplined troops and partly of Canadians, to act from Canada; a large levy of Indians, with a supply of arms for the Blacks to awe the Southern Provinces conjointly with detachments of Regulars; and a numerous fleet to sweep the whole coast;—might possibly do the whole business in one campaign. . . . But I am fully persuaded that any intermediate measure, supposing the Confederation to be general, will be productive of much fruitless expense, great loss of blood, and a series of disappointments. [Fonblanque 142-152]

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<sup>1</sup> MEM<sup>o</sup>

The Duke of Brunswick, brother in law of George III, furnished or one sixth of his men of military age.	15,722
The Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, whose troops were accounted the best in Europe, furnished or one fourth of his men of military age.	12,700
The Prince of Waldeck, for a big cash price per man, furnished one full regiment.	600
Total German mercenaries, according to Bancroft (IV. Chapter 22) Rank & File.	19,022

II. GEN<sup>L</sup> BURGOYNE TO LORD STANLEY, HIS NEPHEW, DATED  
BOSTON JUNE 25, 1775 (AMERICAN ARCHIVES, II. 1094).

(This letter gives a most graphic description of the Battle, but is so well known that only extracts are here given.

N. B. — Fonblanque's version of this letter does not agree in all points with that published in Mahon's History of England, Vol. vi.)

[Extracts]

It was absolutely necessary we should make ourselves masters of these Heights (i.e. Dorchester Neck & Charlestown), and we proposed to begin with Dorchester. . . . Everything was accordingly disposed: my two colleagues and myself (who, by the by, have never differed one jot in military sentiment) had, in concert with Gen<sup>L</sup> Gage, formed the Plan:— Gen<sup>L</sup> Howe was to land the transports on the Point; Clinton in the Centre; and I to take advantage of circumstances. The operation must have been very easy: this was to have been executed on the 18<sup>th</sup>. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, at dawn of day, we found the enemy had pushed intrenchments with great diligence during the night on the Heights of Charlestown. . . . It therefore became necessary to alter our plan and attack on that side.

Howe, as second in command, was detached with about 2000 men and landed on the outward side of the peninsula, covered with shipping, without opposition. . . . Howe's disposition was exceedingly soldierlike; in my opinion it was perfect. As his first arm advanced up the hill, they met with a thousand impediments from strong fences and were much exposed. They were also exceedingly hurt by musketry fire from Charlestown; though Clinton & I did not perceive it until Howe sent us word by boat & desired us to set fire

to the Town, which was immediately done. . . . Clinton & myself took our stand (for we had not any fixed point) in a large battery directly opposite Charlestown [*i.e.* on Copps Hill]. . . . A moment of the day was critical: Howe's Left was staggered; two battalions had been sent to reinforce them, but we perceived them on the beach seeming in embarrassment what way to march. Clinton then, next for business, took the part without waiting for orders, threw himself into a boat to head them: he arrived in time to be of service. The day ended in glory; and the success was most important, considering the ascendancy it gave the Regular troops; but the loss was uncommon in officers for the numbers engaged.

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III. GEN<sup>L</sup> BURGOYNE TO LORD GEORGE GERMAIN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, DATED BOSTON AUG. 20, 1775.

[Extracts]

Whatever party in America may father this rebellion, all parties in England have contributed to nurse it into strength . . . till after procrastination, not only of vigorous measures, but of preparation for such, we took a step as decisive as the passage of the Rubicon and found ourselves plunged at once into a most serious war without a single requisite except gunpowder for carrying it on.

Such was the beginning of the Campaign; and almost the only circumstance, upon which the mind can rest with a moment's satisfaction since, is the victory obtained at Charlestown by the Spirit & conduct of M<sup>r</sup> Howe & the exemplary, almost unexampled bravery of the officers under him. It would depreciate this victory to estimate only its immediate effects. Great as they are, they do not more than compensate the heavy loss by which it was bought. . . . The blockade



of Boston cannot be effectually relieved, Not that I think it impossible, even with our disparity of numbers, to dislodge the enemy from their present posts, . . . conceiving, therefore, that an attack upon the adjacent intrenchments might be attended with considerable loss and no possible advantage, my colleagues & I have been unanimous (as indeed we have been upon every other matter) to advise operations at a distance. My own favorite plan is a descent at Rhode Island, where I would entrench; and I think it might be effected with two thousand men and some frigates. I have set forth, in a Memorandum to Gen<sup>l</sup> Gage the advantages that I think possessing that post would afford, not only as a diversion that might probably disperse the army before Boston, but likewise as it is of importance to cover & facilitate greater designs. I confess a despair of seeing this or any other enterprize take place: our efforts at best have but the disappointed vigor of a dream. . . . I have a most sincere value for Gen<sup>l</sup> Gage's Character, which is replete with virtues & with talents. That is not a cast proper for his present situation, I allow. To have prevented, or to have redeemed the circumstances of this war, required a man of the greatest resources of mind — of a spirit not to be overborne by difficulties; but, above all, of a resolution to act upon the occasion: and, in events which the King's servants at home could not have foreseen, to substitute reason and principle for orders, — to State his motives, — and whatever were the fortune of his undertaking, to submit his honor & his head to the judgment of his country.

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THE THREE MAJOR-GENERALS: HOWE, CLINTON, AND  
BURGOYNE.

The throwing overboard of the 343 chests of tea belonging to the East India Company was Boston's uncompromising answer to the test question, "Shall not the King's will be supreme over the combination of the American Colonies to refuse British goods until *all* the taxes on imports into the Colonies shall be repealed — all but the Tea Tax having been repealed by Parliament?" — and Boston spoke for all the American Colonies.

When the news of Boston's bold defiance reached England, the storm of indignation was furious; and five Punitive Acts of Parliament were passed by overwhelming majorities. The first of these Acts was the Boston Port Bill, which was to go into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June, 1774; it was intended to ruin the commerce of Boston, to deprive the town's people of all maritime commerce which had been the source of its prosperity, and to reduce them to abject poverty.

"This Nation was told," said Lord Chatham in his great speech, eleven months later, on Dec. 22, 1774, "that it was only a small faction in Boston which opposed all lawful government, and that the least appearance of firmness would awe the Americans into submission. These measures, which have produced the present alarming state of America, were founded upon misrepresentation; they were violent, precipitate, and vindictive."

General Gage, then in England on leave of absence after seventeen years of continuous service in America, assured the King that a show of firm resolution would be followed by submission; and he offered to bring Boston to her knees with four regiments. The King took him at his word, gave

him four regiments, and sent him to Boston as Governor and Captain-general of Massachusetts, in addition to his military powers as Commander-in-chief of the Army in America. He sailed from Plymouth April 16<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Boston Harbor May 13<sup>th</sup>, bringing with him the Boston Port Bill, which he was to put into execution on June 1<sup>st</sup>. But though he had started immediately and had come in the swiftest of His Majesty's frigates, the "Lively," the friends of America in London had sent by a faster ship a copy of the Port Bill, which reached Boston three days before Gage; and, as he sailed up the harbor, a Boston Town Meeting was already deliberating on the matter.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, two days after his inauguration as Governor, General Gage frankly reported home a vastly more serious condition than he, or anyone else in England, had dreamed, and that all the Colonies supported Massachusetts; the disaffection grew so rapidly that by November, 1774, General Gage had concentrated every available soldier in America at Boston to defend the town, rather than to awe the province into submission to the King's will. By January, 1775, the King was greatly dissatisfied with Gage's inactivity and was convinced that a more energetic and aggressive general should replace him in command of the Army in America. He offered Lord Amherst the command, who refused to serve against the Americans; then he decided to leave General Gage in his dual office of Commander-in-chief and of Governor of Massachusetts, but to send to his assistance a staff of his ablest generals; and he selected Major-generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne for this work,—all three in the prime of life, with great military experience and brilliant records. As these generals became historic characters during the American Revolution it seems proper to know something of their military records when they landed at Boston.

## SIR WILLIAM HOWE, MAJOR-GENERAL (1729-1814).

General Howe was the youngest of the three sons of the second Viscount Howe; his eldest brother was the Lord Howe who was killed at Ticonderoga, a man almost idolized throughout New England; Richard, the fourth Viscount Howe, was the then famous Admiral Howe: all three brothers well known as friendly to the Americans. In fact General Howe, as member of Parliament, had been very outspoken against the Punitive Acts; his appointment was far from being an act of political favoritism, for the King always looked personally into all high military appointments involving important military responsibility, and, in this case, Howe's splendid record determined the King to insist on Howe as the first of the Three Major-generals to be sent to Boston. Absolutely fearless and of proverbial gallantry, General Howe asked the King whether he should consider the honor tendered as a request or as an order; the King replied that it was an order, and Howe, like a good soldier, obeyed it.

General Howe had served in the Army since he was eighteen; he was now forty-six years old. After his first campaign in Flanders in 1747-48, he was promoted in 1750 to a captaincy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Foot, of which Wolfe was major and later lieutenant-colonel commanding; in 1758 Howe commanded the 60<sup>th</sup> Foot at the Siege of Louisburg under the personal command of General Wolfe, who wrote home: "Our old comrade Howe is at the head of the best-trained battalion in America, and his conduct in the campaign corresponded with the opinion we had formed of him." Wolfe put Howe in command of the Light Infantry Battalion, composed of picked men of the Army of Louisburg, and took the battalion with him to Quebec in 1759. In the final battle, it was Howe who led the forlorn hope of twenty-four men up the ravine to the

Heights of Abraham, capturing the sleeping French outpost at the top and clearing the way for Wolfe to come up with his army. Wolfe had selected Howe for the important task of covering his rear from attacks of Bougainville, who had some 3000 troops at Beauport on the march to succor Montcalm; with his 400 Light Infantry he stood off the dashing Bougainville until Wolfe had utterly routed Montcalm. Early in 1760 Howe commanded a brigade in the army which General Murray led to the capture of Montreal. It is a coincidence that General Murray's force united with General Gage's force against Montreal and their united forces compelled the surrender of the last French force in America. In 1761 he commanded a brigade in the famous Siege of Belle Isle (in Brittany), and in 1762 was adjutant-general of the Duke of Albermarle's army at the siege and capture of Havana. At the close of the war, no officer had a more brilliant record than Howe. In 1772 Howe was promoted major-general; and in 1774 was entrusted with the training of select companies, detached from various regiments at home, in a new system of Light Infantry tactics. The success of General Howe's new Infantry tactics was so marked that they were soon after adopted by all the Line Regiments for their Light Infantry companies. The peculiar feature of Howe's new tactics was the company movement by files—the file being the tactical unit of the company, instead of the platoon—and formation from files. After his thorough training of the detached companies in the new system on Salisbury Plain, they were reviewed in Richmond Park by the King and sent back to their regiments. The new system greatly increased the mobility and individuality of Infantry and its consequent efficiency in field-operations; in this it was the prototype of the French *Tirailleur* (or Skirmish) tactics, introduced in the French Revolutionary armies, which enabled Infantry, with but six months' service with their colors, to win decisive

victories over the veteran battalions of Frederick the Great's old army.

Therefore the King could not find among all his generals a man surpassing General Howe in gallantry and dash, in joyous confidence and eagerness to bring matters to an immediate issue in an active and sharp campaign; nor one who was more resourceful and bold in adapting the advanced methods of military science to increase the efficiency of the British army. Undoubtedly his service in Wolfe's Quebec campaign, as commander of the Light Infantry, had suggested the importance of Light Infantry as more mobile than the heavy-column formation of the Line Companies, necessarily slow of movement: the individuality and initiative of the colonial troops were keenly observed and appreciated by him. For these reasons, although Howe had opposed the King's American policy as a member of Parliament, the King insisted that he should go to America as the senior of the Three British Major-generals, sent to Boston in the spring of 1775 with large reinforcements to bring matters to a speedy conclusion in a single vigorous campaign. General Howe's letters of June 12<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>d</sup>, 1775 (hitherto unpublished, but now appended to this address), do him infinite credit as a brave, resourceful, and skilful general who carefully studies the military topography of the seat of war, and *then* plans the campaign boldly.

As the senior major-general he was properly in command of the force sent to Charlestown Heights; and I venture to believe that a careful study of General Howe's letter to Lord Howe of June 22, 1775, will lead irresistibly to Burgoyne's conclusion that "Howe's disposition was extremely soldier like: in my opinion, it was perfect." If we carefully study the maps of Page and De Berniere, we shall be able to make out these dispositions of General Howe. First, he decided to land at Moulton's Point and thence to attack the American Left which covered their line of communications; this was the prin-

ciple of grand tactics recognized by all great generals: second, on landing the first embarkation of four battalions with one battery of artillery he formed on two lines on Moulton Hill 100 yards from the shore to cover the landing, his artillery in front commanding the marshy ground between him and the enemy; his advance guards, each of four companies, pushed out to the Bunker Hill Road and to the clay pits, on his left and right, to hold off the enemy's skirmishes: third, when the two remaining battalions and two more batteries of artillery had landed he sent General Pigot 400 yards to his left with the 38<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>d</sup> Regiments to a point opposite the Redoubt and overlooking the town with orders to keep his men "under the Brow of the Hill" (the old "Training Field," now known as Winthrop Square), there to await orders: this movement covered Howe's left and rear in carrying out his plan for attacking and turning the American Left to seize their line of communications and retreat. This was Howe's main object; for it he reserved the picked men of the army, the two battalions of Light Infantry and Grenadiers, each about 400 strong; the Light Infantry to march quickly along the Mystic Beach to surprise and turn the extreme American Left, followed slowly by the Grenadiers, echelloned on their left, who were to attack the American Left in front; the 5<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>d</sup> Regiments ready to support the Grenadiers. Meanwhile the Artillery opened a steady fire on the interval between the Rail Fence and the Breastwork to prevent reinforcements reaching the Redoubt, and to destroy the formation of the Americans if they should retreat from the Redoubt or attempt to reinforce its defenders.

According to the map of Lieutenant Page, engineer officer on Howe's staff and at his side constantly until seriously wounded, the plan was to push forward these four battalions under Howe's personal leadership to the cross road (formed by the junction of Elm Street and Bunker Hill Road), by which only could the Americans retreat from the Redoubt on

Breed's Hill; with these four battalions in the American rear Pigot was then to attack the Redoubt in front on its eastern side. The result seemed inevitable: the destruction or surrender of the entire American force on Breed's Hill, without any serious loss on the part of the British. The distance from Moulton's Hill to the Rail Fence was only 500 yards on the unobstructed beach of the Mystic, covered by a ridge from the fire and out of the sight of the enemy on Breed's Hill; the Light Infantry surely ought to cover that short distance in less than ten minutes and turn the enemy's flank by surprise. The Grenadiers, heavier and slower troops, had to cross the marsh near the Clay Pits, and ascending to the low ridge between Breed's Hill and the Mystic, called the "Tongue of Land," cross the level open pasture, 200 yards wide and 300 yards long, extending from the marsh to the Rail Fence; but this open pasture ground was cut by four diagonal pasture fences made of field stones on top of which were "post-and-rail" fences two rails high. These the Grenadiers had to cross. Howe says of these fences, military obstacles quite equal to the best abattis: "The intermediate space between the two armies was cut by fences, formed of strong posts and close railing very high, and which could not be broken readily. Had they not been in our way the Rebels would have been quickly forced upon *their* left without any great loss on our side"; and he adds, "Upon *our* left Pigot met similar obstacles in his advance to the attack of the Redoubt." We have here the explanation why the fate of the Light Infantry was settled and those fine troops were repulsed and routed on Mystic Beach before the Grenadiers could attack the Rail Fence Line in front. Stunned by this failure of the first attack, Howe halted the Grenadiers before they had come under fire; he had failed to turn the American Left Flank by surprise; his plan was now known to the enemy and he ordered a general attack along his whole front,—Pigot on the British Left



with the 38<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>d</sup> to attack the Breastwork and east side of the Redoubt in front; Howe in person to lead the Grenadiers supported by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>d</sup> Regiments to attack the Rail Fence in front and to carry it at all hazards. But Pigot sent word to Howe that he could not advance against the Redoubt, because of the American troops strongly posted and firing from the loopholed houses in the town on his left and rear. This caused quite an interval between the first (or Light Infantry) attack and the second (or general) attack while Howe was sending a message across the river to Burgoyne on Copp's Hill requesting him to set the town on fire by shells from his battery there—which was promptly done.

Of this fire on Pigot from the town, Howe says, "It alone would have given him sufficient employment, had it not been set on fire by order, at this critical time, with a carcass from the Battery upon the Town Hill at Boston. This relieved Pigot from the difficulty on his Left, and he carried the Redoubt in a very handsome manner at the *second* onset; though it was defended most obstinately to the last, thirty of the Rebels having been killed by bayonets within it." Thus Howe confesses Pigot's repulse at the *first* he made.

Here it should be noted that, when the British were seen landing at Moulton's Point, Colonel Prescott detailed the Lieutenant-Colonel and the Major of his own regiment, each with a strong detachment, to go down into the town and cover his right flank; these troops, with other companies sent by Putnam, not only prevented Pigot from turning Prescott's Right, but (as we see by Page's map) compelled Pigot to change front with the 43<sup>d</sup> Regiment so as to face the town to hold off the Americans in the town. This was the reason why Pigot could not obey Howe's order to attack the Redoubt until the town should be set on fire and the Americans thus driven

away from his Left. This redounds greatly to Prescott's credit as a soldier of merit.

Howe led the Grenadiers in the second attack; he was in the midst of that terrible onset, determined to win the cross-road one hundred yards behind the Rail Fence at all hazards. The New Hampshire regiments of Stark and Reed stood firm behind that frail cover — a hedge rather than a breastwork — until the Grenadiers were within the traditional forty paces; then poured forth a solid volley of "buck and ball" (which was introduced then into the American Army and continued to be used as the standard of infantry fire until the rifled musket superseded the smooth-bore musket). The two deserted guns of Captain Callender, sent by Prescott with Knowlton's Connecticut troops to guard his left, were dragged to the Rail Fence by Captain Ford's company of Bridge's Infantry Regiment, personally loaded by General Putnam with bags of musket balls which he took from his saddle bags, and cut ghastly lanes through the Grenadiers as they advanced in very deep files through the gaps in the last fence. The Grenadiers were literally cut to pieces in the second attack: the four companies at the head of the Grenadier Battalion in those few minutes of infernal fire lost more than 85 per cent, not more than 25 of the 200 men in those four companies escaped untouched. An officer in Boston, writing home on July 5<sup>th</sup>, gives the following graphic description of the scene: "As we approached, an incessant stream of fire poured from the Rebel line; it seemed a continued sheet of fire for near thirty minutes [N. B. Accounts of Americans, engaged at the Rail Fence, say ten to fifteen minutes before the British broke]; our Light Infantry were served up in companies against the grass fence without being able to penetrate. Indeed how could we penetrate? Most of the Grenadiers and Light Infantry, the moment of presenting themselves, lost three-fourths and many nine-tenths of their men; some had

only 8 or 9 men a company left, some only 3, 4, or 5!" Such was the fate of the Grenadier Battalion in front of the Rail Fence, as described by a British officer, and the official histories of the British regiments and the Diary of Lieutenant John Barker of the 4<sup>th</sup> Foot concur in stating the losses of the four companies at the head of the column, which we know to have been the Grenadiers of the 23<sup>d</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 52<sup>d</sup>, counting from the right of the line: 23<sup>d</sup> Grenadiers lost 44 of its 49 men, the 4<sup>th</sup> all but 4, the 52<sup>d</sup> all but 8, the 10<sup>th</sup> every officer and about 40 men. We have also an official detailed report of the Light Infantry Company of the 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment: that it entered the action with 38 officers and men; its position was immediately on the right of the Grenadiers of the 23<sup>d</sup>, next to Mystic Beach — the only Light Infantry engaged in the second attack, having been landed from the transport just arrived. In that second attack it lost every officer and non-commissioned officer and 25 of its 30 privates — 32 of its 38 officers and men, or 85 per cent! Then the "eldest soldier" of the 5 privates unscathed rallied his men and kept up the company organization and, when the Americans retreated, he — this "eldest soldier" — led on his equally brave comrades in the pursuit, during which 2 more fell, making this one company's loss 35 out of 38; and the Grenadier Company of the 35<sup>th</sup> "lost as heavily," losing 34 officers and men!

Such startling figures speak for themselves. A loss more than 80 per cent in ten to fifteen minutes must have been largely due to canister fire sweeping off the whole head of the column before it could deploy. We know who fired Callender's deserted guns; we have the depositions of men of Knowlton's detachment and of Bridge's Regiment that the guns were dragged to the Rail Fence and loaded with canvas bags of musket balls and fired several times by General Putnam, who took the bags of balls from his saddle bags;

Davidson of Captain Ford's company (Bridge's Regiment) says he "remembers Putnam's expression when the second discharge of one of the guns loaded with canister made a lane through the enemy." And on De Berniere's map we find marked two guns in the Rail Fence Line "where the Grenadiers met a very heavy fire," one of them opposite the right of the Grenadier battalion.

We know by the deposition of Captain Barker of Reed's New Hampshire regiment that, after the defeat of the Light Infantry, Putnam "came to about the centre of our (Reed's) regiment, warmly praised the men for their bravery and encouraged them to fight well, should the enemy come again"; by the deposition of President Franklin Pierce's father, then of Ford's company, that "Putnam requested our company to drag Callender's guns down Bunker Hill and we drew them to the rail fence"; the deposition of Lieutenant Keyes of Knowlton's company states that he "saw General Putnam after the repulse of the enemy near the field pieces deserted by Callender." The deposition of Josiah Cleveland of Knowlton's detachment is peculiarly interesting; that he "went on the night of the 16<sup>th</sup>, halted at the Neck by General Putnam, and ordered to load with two balls and to march with profound silence. There was a consultation of officers on Bunker Hill. Putnam advanced to the front, suppose he led us to Breed's Hill. He ordered a guard to the shore; I went and returned at daylight. When the enemy landed he ordered the Connecticut and part of the Massachusetts troops to make a breastwork at the rail fence. Before the fire of musketry began he ordered us to lie down and not to fire until we saw their buttons." It has seemed advisable to marshal these sworn depositions as showing the part taken by General Putnam as commanding the *covering party* — the Reserves in Charlestown, which protected the left and rear of the *Fatigue Party* under Colonel Prescott which built the Redoubt, and Putnam's efficient service in defence of their line of retreat.

But look at the other side. Behold that "eldest soldier" heading the five remaining privates of the 35<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry in pursuit of the retreating provincials after 85 per cent of his company had fallen in front of the Rail Fence. I doubt whether the history of war can show a parallel for bravery and discipline. No matter what the color of his uniform, no matter what the cause for which he was fighting, let us give to him and his equally brave comrades our unstinted admiration and honor!

Yet there were other heroes on both sides equally gallant on that day: Prescott with his handful of men in the Redoubt with scarcely a bayonet and barely more than one cartridge a man, "most obstinately defending it to the last, thirty Rebels having been killed with bayonets within it," as General Howe writes; Prescott coolly parrying bayonets with his sword as he retreats after his wonderful defence; Colonel Bridge also, driven with his men into the Redoubt from the Breastwork by enfilading fire of the British artillery, cutting his way through assailants swarming into the Redoubt on three sides, so closely pressed as to carry away the honorable scars of sword cuts on his head — his Lieutenant-colonel Parker and his Captain Walker left mortally wounded in the Redoubt; and last but not least — for he came as a volunteer to share the danger of this band of heroes — was General Joseph Warren, president of the Provincial Congress and chairman of the Committee of Safety, who, when begged by friendly British officers to halt and surrender to save his life, turned his head to look his thanks and then continued his descent from the Redoubt in the face of instant death. These men were equal in gallantry to that "eldest soldier."

But of all who fought on that memorable day in that Valhalla of Heroism there was not one whose responsibility for the result of that battle was so overwhelming as General Howe; for he well knew that the possession of

the American Colonies—by themselves or by the King—was the prize of that day's battle. He had told his men, in giving the order to advance, that he himself would *lead* them to victory; and, as did his friend Wolfe at Quebec, he led the Grenadiers in the great attack on the Rail Fence; and he kept his word without flinching, though splashed with the lifeblood of his twelve personal staff officers, every one of whom fell by his side killed or wounded. Then convinced that the Rail Fence Line was impregnable, he changed his plan of attack, reorganized his shattered battalions as soon as they could be rallied, concentrated his whole force against the east side of the Redoubt and Breastwork, leaving Clinton with fresh troops (47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines, and the flank companies of the 63<sup>d</sup> Regiment and of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Battalions of Marines) to attack the south front of the Redoubt; to the doubly decimated Grenadier and Light Infantry Battalions was assigned the duty of covering his right flank. Then came the stern order to carry the enemy's works "with the bayonet, no firing until within"; and those brave men again steadily marched on into the zone of fire, already bestrown as thickly with dead and wounded as ever was a breach in the walls of a fortress; they knew not that the defenders were already down to their last cartridges, — so much the grander their courage. Scant as were their remaining means of defence at the time of the third attack, the men at the Breastwork and in the Redoubt made a magnificent defence which cost the British very severely. The diary of Adjutant Waller of the Marines, by whom the south front of the Redoubt was assaulted, records it thus: "We rushed on, leaped the ditch and climbed the parapet under a most heavy fire: one captain and one subaltern fell in getting up, and one captain and one subaltern were wounded in our corps. Three captains of the 52<sup>d</sup> were killed on the parapet, and others that I know nothing of."

The Battle of Bunker Hill cost the British 1054 casualties,

the flower of the army — 40 per cent of the troops engaged, 30 per cent of their available Field Force. The Army in Boston was thenceforth put on the defensive; they had failed in their desperate attempt to raise the siege of Boston, in spite of the most persistent gallantry; there was no longer any danger of their attempting to seize Dorchester Heights; they had been compelled to abandon *that*, the condition precedent of indefinite possession of Boston itself. In this light we may say that the American campaign objective was won at Bunker Hill; namely, to prevent the siege of Boston being raised; to reduce the army in Boston to the defensive until we should have sufficient artillery to occupy Dorchester Heights in force and present the British general the disagreeable alternative of capitulation or evacuation — either one of which would involve the loss of, at least, the New England Colonies to the King.

But what was the effect of this battle upon the army in Boston? General Burgoyne's letter to Lord Rochford of June 22<sup>d</sup> is sufficiently explicit on this point. This is how he describes the demoralization which followed:

“The men in all the Corps having twice felt their enemy  
“to be more formidable than they expected, it will re-  
“quire some training under such generals as Howe and  
“Clinton before they can prudently be entrusted in many  
“exploits against such odds as the spirit and conduct of  
“the leaders enabled them in this instance to overcome.”

Not less momentous was the effect upon the character of General Howe, branded upon his very soul as he stood alone in the midst of the carnage in front of the Rail Fence. Trevelyan, the English historian, thus describes it in his recent and admirable “History of the American Revolution” (1899):

“Howe was never the same man again as when, standing  
“on Charlestown Beach among his picked companies,  
“he gave the signal for the first onset. ‘The sad and

“impressive experience (so we are told) of that murderous  
“day sank deep into his mind.’ After Howe had suc-  
“ceeded to the supreme command, it exercised a perma-  
“nent & potent influence on the operations of the War.  
“That joyous confidence, that eagerness to bring matters  
“to an immediate issue — which had been his most valu-  
“able military endowments, henceforward were apt to fail  
“him at the very moment when they were especially  
“wanted. Careless as ever of his personal safety, he was  
“destined to lose more than one opportunity of decisive  
“victory by unwillingness to risk his men’s lives & his  
“own fame against an intrenchment with American rifle-  
“men behind it.” [Trevelyan, I. 338.]

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SIR HENRY CLINTON, MAJOR-GENERAL (1738–1795).

General Clinton was thirty-seven years of age when he came to America in 1775, the youngest of the Three Major-Generals, and like his two colleagues a member of Parliament. His father was an admiral, a younger son of the sixth Earl of Lincoln, and had been Governor of Newfoundland (1732–1741) and Governor of New York from 1741 to 1751. General Clinton was born in Newfoundland and his first military service, curiously enough, was in the New York militia. On the return of his father to England, young Clinton was gazetted lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards in November, 1751, but saw no active service until 1760, when a brigade of the Guards was attached to the army of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick in Flanders. He there speedily showed his merit and was selected as aide-de-camp to the hereditary Prince of Brunswick. His gallantry was so conspicuous that he was promoted colonel in 1762, and after the conclusion of peace was appointed by the King colonel of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the British Army; and in 1772 major-general. Such was the military record of General Clinton when he was selected



as the second of the Three Major-generals to put vigor into the King's Army in America. His conduct at Bunker Hill was so distinguished that he was promoted to be lieutenant-general in September, 1775, and full general in 1776, when he was sent to America with reinforcements that spring and made second in command to General Howe. He continued in America with his headquarters in New York until 1781, when he turned over the command to General Carleton, after Cornwallis' surrender, and returned to England. Promoted to be full general in the British Army, he was appointed to the important governorship of Gibraltar in 1794, where he subsequently died in 1795, at the age of fifty-seven years.

In Boston the arrival of reinforcements in June, 1775, increased the force so that it was reorganized into three divisions as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Division, Major-general Howe commanding, consisting of  
Pigot's Brigade — 5<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, 43<sup>d</sup>, and 52<sup>d</sup> Regiments,  
Light Infantry Battalion (10 companies)  
Grenadier Battalion (10 companies)
- 2<sup>d</sup> Division, Major-general Clinton commanding, consisting of  
Percy's Brigade — 4<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>d</sup>, and 47<sup>th</sup> Regiments and  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of Marines  
Light Infantry of 63<sup>d</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines and 2<sup>d</sup> Marines;  
Grenadiers of 63<sup>d</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines and 2<sup>d</sup> Marines;
- 3<sup>d</sup> Division, Major-general Burgoyne commanding, consisting of  
Jones' Brigade — 10<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>d</sup>, and 59<sup>th</sup> Regiments and  
2<sup>d</sup> Battalion of Marines.

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There were in Boston on June 17, 1775, the following other troops not attached to any brigade:

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63<sup>d</sup> Regiment arrived June 15<sup>th</sup>; 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment arrived June 16<sup>th</sup>; 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment arriving June 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>  
17<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons arrived May 24<sup>th</sup>, remaining un-  
attached for special service where required  
65<sup>th</sup>, two flank companies, attached to Howe's battallions  
of Light Infantry and Grenadiers  
18<sup>th</sup>, the Grenadier Company (engaged at Bunker Hill)  
and two line companies (not engaged)

Howe's entire division was engaged, reinforced by the two flank companies of the 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the Grenadier company of the 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Later, in time for the third attack, the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines, and the flank companies of the 63<sup>d</sup> Regiment and of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Marines of Clinton's Division were sent over as reinforcement; of these Clinton took command and gallantly led them in the final attack.

There remained then in Boston all of Burgoyne's Division and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>d</sup> Regiments of Percy's Brigade of Clinton's Division, beside the unattached troops.

Barker's Diary<sup>1</sup> informs us that on the night of June 17<sup>th</sup> the forces of Howe at Charlestown were reinforced with the 2<sup>d</sup> Marines, the 63<sup>d</sup> Regiment, and the Light Infantry, and Grenadier Companies of the 64<sup>th</sup> Regiment brought up from Castle William, all of them remaining at Charlestown until June 23<sup>d</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> Marines returned to Boston June 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to the sending of the 63<sup>d</sup> Regiment and 2<sup>d</sup> Marines to Charlestown immediately after the battle, together with the flank companies of the 64<sup>th</sup> in garrison at Castle William,

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the Diary of John Barker, captain 4<sup>th</sup> "King's Own" Regiment, were published some years ago by Miss Dana, of Cambridge.

<sup>2</sup> These facts appear in Howe's Orderly Book and are indisputable. Of Clark's statement, however credible, of much larger reinforcements being sent over that night (five battalions and a company of Artillery), Howe's Orderly Book makes no mention; perhaps because they were sent for only that night, until Howe's forces should recover from their exhaustion. It may here be noted that two hundred men from the 64<sup>th</sup> Regiment (the garrison at Castle William) were sent to Charlestown Neck to cover the retreat from Lexington.

we gain a sidelight of the exhaustion of the troops engaged in the battle. This is emphasized in Clark's contemporaneous narrative of the battle of Bunker Hill that "the Americans being defeated and the King's troops in possession of the intrenchments, Major-general Howe sent to Lieutenant-general Gage for a reinforcement of troops, who immediately sent him four regiments of troops and the Second Battalion of Marines, a company of artillery and six pieces of cannon." This seems to imply not only that Howe had abandoned all intention to pursue the Americans intrenching a mile away from Prospect Hill to Plowed Hill, but that he did not feel altogether sure of his ability to hold Charlestown peninsula that night. Howe's orderly book (first printed from the original manuscript in 1890) gives his morning orders on June 18<sup>th</sup>: "The whole force to furnish one third of their numbers for work, with officers and non-commissioned officers in proportion, and be relieved every four hours. The partys at work to carry their arms and lodge them securely while on that Duty." Such an order seems to indicate that he deemed it necessary to fortify his position at Charlestown to protect it. When he wrote to his brother, Admiral Howe, on June 22, he said, "My Corps is now encamped upon these Heights in a very Strong situation, with 3 respectable redoubts, and without the least apprehension of being attacked." In his morning orders on June 19<sup>th</sup> General Howe repeats this order and adds that he "expects the men will perform the labor required of them with cheerfulness and alacrity. . . . In case of alarm, the Corps will immediately strike their tents and form in the front of their respective encampments." Certainly this does not indicate General Howe's opinion of the battle as a decisive victory for the British Army — much less of resuming the offensive to raise the siege of Boston. In his letter to Admiral Howe he says, "I much doubt whether we shall get much farther this campaign"; and he refers to the

Americans "having intrenched themselves very judiciously about 2 miles in our front."

We have an interesting account of how General Clinton came to take part in the battle; it is given by Dr. John Jeffries, then a young physician in Boston, whose son wrote it out in graphic style: it was first published in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of June 17, 1875, and republished by the Bunker Hill Monument Association, 1906. The following extract speaks for itself. The son, Dr. John Jeffries, Jr., says:

"On the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, as my father was reading a small newspaper in the parlour of the house where he resided — being that of his uncle, the Hon. John Jeffries opposite the King's Chapel, which was a rendezvous for all officers of high rank in the Army and Navy — Gen<sup>l</sup> Clinton entered & said 'Dr. John, I am told that the rebels have thrown up some works last night on the hill over the water. I shall send troops to drive them off. Would you like to go with me and see it?'

"He subsequently accompanied the General to Copp's Hill from which there was a full view of the incidents which transpired.

"Gen<sup>l</sup> Clinton was deeply interested and pleased with the beauty of the scene, the perfect regularity of the boats carrying the troops in their bright uniforms, the landing on the beach, the forming in line and the march up the hill. As they approached the Redoubt without any opposition, Clinton exclaimed, 'How is this? They have vacated the fort. They have run away!' Just then came the fatal fire which broke the ranks of the British soldiers and drove them back to the beach. 'What is that? What is that?' exclaimed Gen<sup>l</sup> Clinton in great excitement. 'Ha, ha, they are forming again! Now we shall see!' The second attack being attended with similar results, Gen<sup>l</sup> Clinton determined to go over immediately, which he did, taking my father with him."

It was Dr. Jeffries who identified the body of General Warren, at the request of General Clinton; he had known him intimately and, at his request, had met him secretly shortly before the battle, when he came to the end of the Ferry Wharf in a small boat to offer Dr. Jeffries the position of surgeon-general of the Provincial Army, offering him great inducements to accept it.

General Burgoyne, in his letter to Lord Stanley ("American Archives," II. 1095), says "A moment of the day was critical. Howe's Left was staggered; two battalions had been sent to reinforce them, but we perceived them on the beach seeming in embarrassment what way to march. Clinton, then next for business, took the part without waiting for orders, threw himself into a boat to head them: he arrived in time to be of service." Those two battalions were the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of Marines belonging to Clinton's own division. He formed them and led them along the southern slope of Breed's Hill and then straight up the hill to assault the south front of the Redoubt. With them he had the six flank companies of his own division. It is stated by Colonel Swett that "Major Small returned from Boston with the last reinforcements — a few companies of Marines — and was accompanied by Dr. Jeffries, an eminent surgeon" (Swett's History, p. 37); and in another place he estimates the number who crossed with Dr. Jeffries at 400 (ib. p. 31), probably too large an estimate as the four flank companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Marines who we know were engaged under Clinton averaged about forty rank and file. It was this reinforcement of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the Marines from Clinton's division which carried the Redoubt in the third attack; and the flank companies of the 2<sup>d</sup> Marines, turning the American Right after dislodging the American companies on the Green Street Line, poured in a deadly volley on the Americans retreating from the Redoubt, which (say the American accounts) caused them

“greater loss than they had suffered during the day.” But General Gage’s report of casualties shows that this brilliant movement of the Light Infantry and Grenadier companies of the 2<sup>d</sup> Marines cost them heavily — forty killed and wounded, or about one-half of all engaged, including five of their six officers. Evidently if the Green Street Line on the American Right had been as strongly manned as the Rail Fence Line on the left, it could not have been carried — and until taken, Clinton’s force was unable to attack the south side of the Redoubt, according to Adjutant Waller of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines. Then he attacked and carried the Redoubt with the bayonet.

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SIR JOHN BURGOYNE, MAJOR-GENERAL (1722–1792).

General Burgoyne entered the British Army at the age of eighteen years as cornet of cavalry, and had seen thirty-five years of military service when he was sent to Boston in 1775, as junior in rank to Major-generals Howe and Clinton. Although seven years older than Howe and sixteen years older than Clinton, he was then fifty-three years of age, and General Gage, the commander-in-chief in America, was one year older. For the first eighteen years of his service he was a cavalry officer; in 1758 he became lieutenant-colonel in the Coldstream Guards, and then saw his first field service on the Continent in the expeditions against Cherbourg and St. Malo in the Seven Years War.

During his service on the Continent he had heard much of the famous light cavalry which Maria Theresa had sent forth in swarms against the heavy cavalry and solid infantry of Frederick the Great, then first known in European Wars as “Hussars” and “Pandours”; they were effectively used for covering the movements of infantry columns, cutting communications, capturing wagon-trains, and stripping the country

by sudden raids and retreating as suddenly. So great were their services in these respects that Frederick transformed part of his heavy cavalry into the equally famous Prussian Hussar regiments. These troops were originally local companies of militia in Hungary and Poland; the Hussars were called "Irregular Horse," because they did not, like the regular cavalry, form part of the regular line of battle with the heavy infantry; the Pandours were independent companies of militia, of special service in devastating the country and cutting the communications of the enemy. They were foot soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Burgoyne had critically studied the character and tactical capacity of this new kind of European light cavalry, and upon his urgent representation, he was authorized by the King to take two regiments and drill them in his new system of light-horse tactics. The success of this experiment was so complete that his two regiments, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, were named respectively the "King's Light Dragoons" and the "Queen's Light Dragoons," and fifteen other regiments were made Light Dragoons — in fact every regiment of heavy cavalry except the ten regiments of the Guards. The 17<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons was the first British cavalry sent to America; it arrived in Boston in May, 1775, and part of this regiment under Colonel Tarlton served in the Carolinas at a later period of the War. The other regiment of Burgoyne's new cavalry, the 16<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons, formed part of Howe's army operating in 1776 and 1777 in New York and the middle Colonies.

<sup>1</sup> The name "Hussar," given to Hungarian Light Cavalry, is derived from "Husz," the Hungarian word for "twenty," because every twenty houses were obliged to furnish one mounted soldier for the defence of the kingdom when invaded. When Maria Theresa appealed to her Hungarian subjects for help against the invaders, swarms of these mounted militia poured forth from every village. "Pandours," originally from the mountainous district of Pandur in Lower Hungary, were the local infantry militia companies — a sort of minute-men. As irregular troops they became a terror to the German villages and to small detachments of troops, much as did the Spanish guerrillas during Napoleon's occupation of Spain.

In 1759 Burgoyne was sent to Portugal, then invaded by Spanish troops. He was in command at the storming of Valencia d'Alcantara, and later, in October, 1762, he stormed the Spanish camp of Villa Velha, which closed the War. During the thirteen years after the War he saw no active service, but being elected to Parliament through the influence of his father-in-law, Earl Derby, he became a member of fashionable London clubs, a reckless gambler as was then the fashion, a politician, and an amateur actor. He was also a friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds and of many who eventually became cabinet ministers. He prided himself as a man of letters as well as a man of fashion; one of his plays was so meritorious that it was acted by the famous David Garrick. In fact, Burgoyne was a very versatile and accomplished man, and was one of the best letter writers of England, second only to Horace Walpole. His versatility was recognized as a soldier in organizing the British Light Cavalry, as a man of letters, and as a member of Parliament. In 1876 a very interesting book of five hundred pages was published in London by Edward B. de Fonblanque; the title, "Life and Correspondence of Right Honorable John Burgoyne — General, Statesman, and Dramatist," indicates the great versatility of General Burgoyne. At all events, his letters from Boston to persons of high rank in England give us vivid descriptions of events connected with the opening of our Revolutionary War and possess rare historical value.

But it may be added that these letters show how he chafed at his enforced inaction as the youngest (by seniority) of the Three Major-generals and how persistently he sought for a command which would give a wider opportunity for military usefulness. The result was that he came home on leave of absence for the winter, to personally advise in regard to the campaign of 1776. His friend and correspondent, Lord George Germain, had become Secretary for the Colonies in



November, 1775; Burgoyne's letters to him after the battle of Bunker Hill indicate a creditable military ability and foresight—especially his letter dated Boston, August 20, 1775, and probably the Government could not have had a more competent military adviser than General Burgoyne. Lord Germain had much consultation with him and the campaign objective was decided upon; namely, to occupy the valley of the Hudson and Lake Champlain by an army advancing southward from Montreal to meet Howe's army advancing northward from New York to Albany thus isolating New England from the other colonies.

The subsequent events of Burgoyne's unfortunate campaign are matters of history and need no comment other than it failed because of the failure of the army from New York to advance up the Hudson to meet him.

Burgoyne was really a general of a high order of military ability; but he did not have the twelve thousand men he was promised to have in Canada, and eventually started for the Hudson with only sixty-four hundred regular troops and six hundred and forty Indians; whether he was wise in detaching St. Leger to reach the Mohawk by way of Fort Stanwix is much to be questioned, as their intended point of junction was far within the enemy's country; on the other hand, his detachment of troops to Bennington, where it was routed by Stark, seems justifiable in view of the shortage of food for his army and because he had no reason to expect any serious resistance. The great fault of the campaign was not due to Burgoyne; Howe had no right to take his field force to the Chesapeake without first providing for placing the force at Albany in time to meet Burgoyne, as had been promised and on which the success of Burgoyne's plan depended. We know from Fiske's History where the blame ultimately rested, but have no occasion here to discuss it further than to exonerate Burgoyne therefor.

But Burgoyne, though not under fire at Bunker Hill by the side of Howe and Clinton, was a factor of great importance in that battle. He was in charge of the battery on Copp's Hill on the Boston side of the Charles; in his letter to Lord Rochford he bitterly complains that, as the youngest Major-general, he was "almost a useless spectator, for my whole business lay in presiding during part of the action over a cannonade to assist the Left." Nevertheless, Trevelyan adds very justly ("History American Revolution," I. 332), "But, in truth, he could not have been more usefully occupied. The fire of his batteries, though too distant to be very murderous, had a more decisive influence on the fate of the day than if he had been mowing down whole columns of infantry with grape at point blank range."

From Copp's Hill his heavy guns (eight twenty-four pounders and one eight-inch mortar) swept the valley of Main Street and Charlestown Neck, cross-fired by the bar and chain shot from the Glasgow frigate off Lechmere Point. Through such a howling tornado of artillery fire it was practically impossible to march raw troops across Charlestown Neck, in any order, if at all. Even that cool veteran Stark had the greatest difficulty in preventing his regiment from breaking and running, telling them, as his senior captain, Dearborn, tells us, that one fresh man was worth more than ten tired men. Capt. Reuben Washburn told his grandson, the late Governor Emory Washburn, that when his company (of Ward's regiment) reached Charlestown Neck, the shot from the Glasgow frigate was sweeping across it; that "the whole company started upon a full run across the Neck to avoid the balls from the frigate as well as they could." Two other companies, Captain Cushing's and Captain Wood's, of the same regiment under its Lieutenant-colonel Ward appear to have crossed the Neck in the same manner; and all three companies did excellent service in covering the retreat of Prescott's men from the

Redoubt, in conjunction with the Connecticut Companies of Captains Clarke, Chester, and Coit, which arrived about the same time. But the main force covering the retreat were Stark's and Reed's New Hampshire regiments and Knowlton's detachment of Connecticut troops, the very men who had defended the Rail Fence Line so gallantly from the beginning of the battle.

Captain Washburn's description of this closing scene of the battle is suggestive of the effect of the artillery fire from the Copp's Hill battery both across the Neck and on the summit and south side of Bunker Hill during the retreat: he says that "the company [his own of Ward's regiment] rushed forward as soon as they had surmounted the Hill [Bunker Hill] and took their station near the Rail Fence and began firing as fast as they could. The men at this time had about fifteen cartridges each. The enemy by this time had mounted the Redoubt; in about twenty or thirty minutes after the company had entered the action, the order was given to retreat. This they did at first slowly and in regular order, keeping together and doing what they could to cover the retreat; but, when they saw that the enemy was gaining upon them and threatening to cut them off on the flank, the company broke and hurried down the hill. But in this retreat they showed nothing of panic." Indeed they carried across the Neck several wounded men in blankets and turned them over to the regiments to which they belonged; moreover, Captain Washburn and three other captains established a patrol during that evening and night to protect the houses and property just beyond the Neck, which their owners had abandoned on account of the cannonade across the Neck. Certainly this vivid account shows that Burgoyne's description in his letter to Lord Rochford was fair to the Americans when he said "The defence was well conceived and obstinately maintained; the Retreat was no flight; it was even covered

with bravery and military skill and proceeded no farther than the next hill, where a new post was taken and new intrenchments instantly begun."

It should be noted in this connection that Putnam had brought the intrenching tools in wagons to the Neck on the night before the battle in advance of Prescott's fatigue party; that Knowlton's detachment of 120 men from Putnam's regiment had come with him to guard the wagons<sup>1</sup>; that, when the British first landed, Prescott had sent Knowlton with Gridley's two guns to protect his left and he saw no more of them that day (as he wrote John Adams); that Putnam, at the time the British first landed at Moulton's Point, had the intrenching tools carried back to the top of Bunker Hill, where he began a new line of intrenchments to cover the retreat of the troops on the firing line; that, after the battle commenced and the spade had to give place to the musket, he sent off the intrenching tools to Plowed Hill; and finally after the retreating forces had crossed the Neck that he marched the New Hampshire men to Plowed Hill, where they worked incessantly all night with constant reliefs, throwing up new intrenchments covering the road to Medford; while the Massachusetts troops were equally busy fortifying Prospect Hill, covering the road to Cambridge. These facts seem to indicate a well-considered plan to hold Charlestown with a moderate force as long as possible and to retreat after inflicting as much loss as possible to the attacking force, with the object of crippling the British field force so as to divert, if not prevent, their occupation of Dorchester Neck on June 18<sup>th</sup> as originally planned.

Indeed the American line of battle was not quite 700 yards long; and at the usual estimate of a yard for every file, 1500

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Storr's Diary states that the detachments of Connecticut troops "went to Bunker Hill at 8 P.M.," on June 16<sup>th</sup>. We know that Prescott left Cambridge Common with the Massachusetts troops an hour later, at 9 o'clock. (See *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, 1875.)

men were all that could be effectively used on the firing line. This was the estimate of Washington of the men actually engaged — the firing line. But a second line of battle was formed by General Putnam of reinforcements as they arrived, including the 700 men of the New Hampshire regiments of Stark and Reed. This second line was about 200 yards to the rear of the Redoubt and Breastwork and extended from Mystic Beach to Main Street. The splendid work of Stark, Reed and Knowlton at the Rail Fence, of Little's Essex Companies between the Breastwork and the Rail Fence, of Doolittle's and other regiments on the Elm Street and Green Street lines in covering the American Right, demonstrate the vital importance of this second line of battle. The forces thus disposed on the second line may have amounted to 1000 men, more or less, engaged. The Redoubt, being 8 rods or 44 yards square, could not have had room on the two sides attacked for more than 176 rank and file. The Breastwork, extending the east side of the Redoubt, was about 120 yards long; which would give space for 240 men. Thus the Redoubt and Breastwork, constituting the first line of battle, would cover no more than 416 men. It should be noted that Colonel Prescott in his letter to John Adams of Aug. 25, 1775, says that after sending his Lieutenant-colonel Robinson and his Major Woods "to flank the enemy . . . I was now left with perhaps 150 men in the Fort." We may assume that Prescott would not have sent off more men than he could properly spare from the Redoubt, which he knew was about to be attacked; and therefore it seems to have been his judgment that no more than 150 men could be advantageously used in the Redoubt. The distance straight across from Mystic Beach to Main Street, the second line of battle, including the Rail Fence Line, the Elm Street Line, and the Green Street Line, was not quite 700 yards; therefore it could not have had room for more than 1400 men. Thus

the *maximum* number of the Americans could not have exceeded 1800, excluding some six companies, which arrived in time to cover the retreat — some 2000 in all.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Swett's description of the terrifying, though not very murderous, cannonade across the approaches to Charlestown Neck from Copp's Hill and the Glasgow frigate confirms Trevelyan's statement already quoted :

“ Gen! Ward had by this time despatched sufficient reinforcements, but they did not reach the field. The fire across the Neck wore an aspect too terrific for raw troops to venture in it. Putnam flew to the spot to hurry them on before the enemy returned [this was apparently in the considerable interval between the first and second attack]. He intreated, threatened, and encouraged them; lashing his horse with the flat of his sword, he rode backward and forward across the Neck through the hottest fire to convince them that there was no danger. The balls threw up clouds

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful whether Prescott's original force was as much as one thousand men. There is conflicting evidence as to the number of Prescott's fatigue party sent to Charlestown on the night of June 16<sup>th</sup> :

I. Prescott's letter to John Adams of Aug. 25, 1775, in reply to his request for “ a particular account of the action at Charlestown,” states : “ On the evening of June 16<sup>th</sup> I received orders to march to Breeds Hill in Charlestown with a party of about one thousand men — consisting of 300 of my own regiment, Col. Bridge and Lieut. [Col.] Brickett with a detachment of theirs, and 200 Connecticut forces commanded by Capt. Knowlton.” We know that the Connecticut force was only 120 men, consisting of thirty men from four companies each.

II. The Massachusetts Provincial Congress, in their letter of June 20<sup>th</sup> to the Continental Congress, says, “ about twelve hundred men.”

III. The Committee of Safety in their statement of July 7, 1775 [signed “ Joseph Palmer per order ”], which was prepared for transmission to England, says : “ A detachment of one thousand men.”

IV. William Tudor to Stephen Collins, in letter dated at Cambridge, 23<sup>d</sup> June, 1775, says : “ I was in the intrenchment at 8 Saturday morning. . . . Only about 800 men had been at work the whole night before.”

V. Judge Thomas Grosvenor to Col. Daniel Putnam, in letter dated at Pomfret, Conn., April 20, 1818, says that the Connecticut contingent was “ A detachment of 4 lieutenants, of whom I was one, and 120 men was selected the preceding day from Gen! Putnam's reg<sup>t</sup> under Capt. Knowlton.”

“of dust about him; and the soldiers were perfectly  
“convinced that he was invulnerable, but not equally  
“convinced of being so themselves. Some of these  
“troops, however, ventured over.”

The real cause of this hesitancy seems due to the fact, inherent to an army in its formative period, that General Ward had no proper staff officers. We know that General Howe had twelve staff officers with him on the field, all men of military experience; we also know that Ward had only a military secretary and one aide-de-camp, though he had as volunteer aids Captain Knox, Benjamin Thompson (the eminent mathematician, afterwards famous as Count Rumford), Major Brooks and Captain Ford, both of Bridge's regiment. Undoubtedly these gentlemen bravely did their best, but their number was utterly inadequate to ordering and putting into effective action some ten or more independent regiments, each consisting of as many more quasi-independent companies; for we must not forget that these regiments had not been brigaded, that there were no brigade commanders, each with staff officers to ensure prompt obedience to the orders of the commanding general. Hence we find regiments halted half-way to Charlestown by the Committee of Safety and not knowing where to go or what to do; they were in much the same plight as Clinton saw his two regiments on Charlestown beach. Napoleon fully recognized the supreme importance of staff officers when he said, “To move a great army, the commander must have a hundred tongues, eyes and ears. These tongues, eyes and ears are his staff officers. It is well known that the staff is the great motor which makes the army move according to the combinations and sudden inspirations of its commander.” As we have seen, Howe had a numerous personal staff of experienced officers at his side on the battlefield and was thus able to move every part of his line of battle as occasion required; it was probably largely due to the loss of

so many of his staff officers in the second attack that the last reinforcements (47<sup>th</sup> Regiment and 1<sup>st</sup> Marines) were seen by Clinton and Burgoyne from Copp's Hill "on the beach seeming in embarrassment what way to march," and why Clinton instantly crossed the river to lead them. On the other hand the personal staff of General Ward was a single aide-de-camp and four volunteer aids (men of great native ability, but without military experience and personally unknown to most of his regimental commanders). It is therefore the more to be wondered how Ward got his army into motion as well as he did, and not to be wondered that many regiments did not reach Charlestown in time to act as regiments. The zeal of many company commanders and their men swept them onward, so that it may truly be said of the reinforcements (except Stark's and Reed's regiments, which arrived as regiments), at least, that the battle was fought by companies rather than by regiments; for the company organization was excellent at that time. Fortunately General Putnam, by his great reputation for energy and zeal, was on Bunker Hill, at the Rail Fence, and at the Neck to encourage, push forward, and command the companies and parts of regiments as they came on to the field. So far as we know Putnam did not have with him a single staff officer; but, galloping furiously from point to point as occasion called, he seems almost everywhere directing and moving troops to where they were most needed, though he himself was steadfastly holding the Rail Fence Line, leaving the equally brave Prescott the honor of defending the Redoubt and its flanks with his original fatigue party.

It is not easy to decide which of the Three Major-generals deserves the most credit for his share in the battle of Bunker Hill; for each did his part so well in their several shares of the work in hand. General Howe, fearlessly leading attack after attack into the very jaws of death,



standing at one time alone among his killed and wounded staff officers with less than half of his splendid Grenadier Battalion unwounded, is a figure never to be forgotten as long as unflinching courage on the battlefield is honored among men.

At last General Clinton's turn came, when he saw the failure of the second attack and two of his own regiments in confusion and standing on Charlestown beach in doubt where to go and what to do; he did not wait for orders, but crossed the river at once to lead his men. He, too, was as picturesque a figure as we read of in the Iliad, for "he revived their courage, rearranged their ranks, and placed himself far enough in their front for everyone to see how an old aide-de-camp of the fighting Prince of Brunswick stepped up a glaciis." [Trevelyan, "History American Revolution," I. 331.] The American account is not less appreciative; Colonel Sweet describes him as the "accomplished and chivalrous General Clinton who now brought his splendid talents into the council and his distinguished gallantry into the field. Immediate and inconceivable was the sensation his appearance produced at this moment of deep despondence. . . . Without waiting for orders, he threw himself into a boat, passed over, and soon breathed into them his own exalted heroism."

Lastly comes Burgoyne, who watched the battle from afar, chafing like a gallant wolf-hound because he could not join in the hand-to-hand struggle going on in full sight from his post on Copp's Hill. But he presided well over his cannonade, as we have seen, setting Charlestown on fire so that Pigot could attack the Redoubt, sweeping the Main Street Valley and Charlestown Neck with his heavy guns, so that Ward's reinforcements did not dare to cross the Neck, except in company dribbles. Above all, let us remember that Burgoyne's letters frankly recognize the bravery and skill of

his foes in maintaining a most obstinate defence of their scanty defences and in conducting their retreat with bravery and military skill; that "their retreat was not flight." The Three Major-generals did credit to the judgment of the King who appointed them!

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THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL CONSIDERED AS A MILITARY  
PROBLEM: ITS PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DEVELOPMENT.

The British campaign objective was to raise the Siege of Boston, and the battle of June 17, 1775, should be considered as an incident of that campaign. Therefore the battle should be measured by its weight in the attainment of the campaign objective, and by the effective British force for field operations available after the battle; this must decide whether the British army in Boston was to remain on the defensive and the blockade be continued, or resume the offensive and again attempt to raise the Siege.

THE BRITISH FORCE IN BOSTON AND AT BUNKER HILL,  
JUNE 17, 1775.

By General Howe's letters we know that, on June 17th, the British force in Boston, exclusive of the Artillery and details from the Infantry serving with the Artillery, was 4500 rank and file, of whom 1200 were required to garrison the town. Thus *3300 rank and file* represented the entire Field Force available for operations outside of the town for raising the Siege. We also know from General Howe's letters that his original force at Charlestown, together with the reinforcements sent to him — his entire force engaged — amounted to "about 2200 rank and file," which was just two-

thirds of the entire Field Force of the British army in Boston on the morning of June 17th.

It may be remarked that "rank and file" was the technical term for the "fighting strength" — the private soldiers; that non-commissioned officers and drummers formed a distinct class of enlisted men; and that they, with the commissioned officers, averaged at that time 20 per cent of the number of the rank and file. By this computation General Howe's force engaged at Bunker Hill was 2640 officers and enlisted men; their loss was 1054 killed and wounded, which was  $\frac{4}{10}$  per cent of the force engaged at Charlestown, or  $26\frac{8}{10}$  per cent of the entire Field Force in Boston before the battle.

These figures are significant of the inability of the British to resume the offensive after the battle, certainly not until the 2d Division from Ireland, of about 1500 rank and file, should arrive; and even then the entire rank and file of the army would not exceed, including the sick list, 1700 men more than the 3400 "fighting men" on June 12th, which Howe and Burgoyne admit in their letters to have been altogether too few for entering upon offensive operations outside of Boston. Inasmuch as the Siege of Boston could not be raised without such offensive operations, the effect of the battle of June 17th was to throw the British on the defensive and thus prevent them again attempting to raise the Siege of Boston, for the present, at least.

Another thing must be taken into account as a permanent drain upon the force available for field operations after the battle; namely, the fortification of Charlestown after the battle was an obvious necessity, and the garrison of Charlestown required (as we know from Howe's Orderly Book) *one third* of the entire army for the next six months, thus neutralizing the addition to the Field Force by reinforcements. The general result was that the British general in command at Boston, whether Gage or Howe, never made another serious

attempt to raise the Siege even after the army was reinforced until, on July 19, 1775, the force in Boston aggregated 8375 rank and file. In a word, the battle of Bunker Hill utterly defeated the campaign objective of the British and kept them on the defensive until Washington, by his masterly occupation of Dorchester Heights in force on March 5, 1776, presented to the British commander the alternative of evacuation or capitulation.

THE NUMBER AND DISPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN ARMY,  
JUNE 16, 1775.

Let us now look at the force and disposition of the American army on the eve of the battle. General Ward commanded the Centre at Cambridge, consisting of fifteen regiments of Massachusetts Infantry and one regiment of Artillery, which on June 16th numbered 7644 officers and men; to which should be added about 1000 Connecticut and New Hampshire troops under General Putnam in the advanced position at Inman's farm, making the Centre at Cambridge about 8600 officers and men.

The American Right under General Thomas was at Roxbury, covering both Dorchester Neck and Boston Neck; it consisted of eight Massachusetts regiments of Infantry (3992 men) and some 3000 troops from Connecticut and Rhode Island, with four companies of Artillery and four siege guns; a total of about 7000 men on June 16th. The American Left at Medford under Colonel Stark consisted of two New Hampshire regiments numbering about 1000 men.

The American army, thus distributed and consisting of some 16,600 men, covered the entire land front of Boston from Dorchester to Chelsea, a semicircle of three miles' radius, thus completely blockading the town on the land side. General Howe thus describes this blockade in his

letter of June 12th to General Harvey, Military Secretary at Headquarters in London: "The situation which the enemy has taken in forming the Blockade is judicious and strong, being well-intrenched where the situation requires it, and with cannon." When Washington took command of the army at Cambridge, one of the first things he did was to study the disposition of the troops along the whole American front, so as to correct any errors in the choice of the several positions taken. He expressed himself perfectly satisfied with Ward's disposition of the forces and made no changes during the Siege. (Marshall's Life of Washington, II. 242.)

It was the American Centre which was engaged, in part, at Bunker Hill, reinforced by the Left Wing under Colonel Stark. It is therefore in order now to critically examine the position of the Centre at Cambridge, briefly remarking that Stark's position at Medford was chosen for blocking boat expeditions up the Mystic River, which was navigable as far as Medford, and for covering the roads converging at Medford from New Hampshire and the counties of Essex and Middlesex, from which a large part of our supplies came.

From the first bridge over Charles River at Cambridge to Charlestown Neck the distance is three miles by the main highway, running nearly east; midway, the road crosses Willis Creek by a bridge, and just beyond the creek there is a crossroad which was the key of the American position at Cambridge and was therefore covered by Fort No. 3, commonly called the "Red House Redoubt." This crossroad was formed by the Watertown road from the west joining the road to Charlestown at this point, and by the road from Lechmere Point to Lexington from the south crossing the above named roads between their junction and the creek. The creek here was crossed by bridges on the Charlestown and the Watertown roads, and midway between these bridges a stream entered

Willis Creek from the west, of sufficient depth to require a bridge over it on the Watertown Road; this bridge was called the "Pilbon Bridge," and this stream covered the American Left at Cambridge. The distance from Pilbon Bridge to Fort No. 1 on the Charles River — the American Right — was one mile due southwest.

The "Cambridge Lines," as the intrenchments there were called, consisted of two parallel lines of intrenchments, two hundred yards apart, crossing Dana Hill about one-quarter of a mile southeasterly from Harvard College; they were in the form of a series of redans (open to the rear) connected by curtains, so as to give them flank fire along their respective fronts; the inner line commanded the interior of the outer line, on the principle so skilfully adopted by General Todleben in planning the Russian land defences at Sebastopol. The Cambridge Lines were about 3000 yards long, the inner line strengthened by redoubts where necessary to make it self-defensive. Six thousand men would be sufficient to defend them properly, and Ward had at Cambridge 7600 Massachusetts troops, leaving him a margin of perhaps 800 troops for offensive operations after deducting 10 per cent for the sick in hospital. Not improbably his detailing 200 Connecticut troops to make up Prescott's 1000 men for fatigue duty at Charlestown may have been due to his prudence in not further reducing the force needed to securely hold the Cambridge Lines against any apprehended attack by the British by way of either Charles River or Willis Creek.

The British troops, on their march to Lexington on the night of April 18th, had landed at Lechmere Point and followed the road parallel to Willis Creek to the crossroad near the "Red House" (Fort No. 3), and thence along the western foot of Prospect Hill to the main road from Cambridge to Lexington; this road, then called "Charlestown Lane," had been used by Ensign Henry de Berniere of the

10th Foot on his return from his Concord reconnaissance of March 20th; he was an exceptionally capable topographical engineer, judging from his reports to General Gage of reconnaissances during February and March, 1775, and by his map of the Bunker Hill battle, which is a masterpiece of military topography; he was selected by General Gage to guide the British troops to Lexington and Concord, where he reported were, on March 20th, ten iron and four brass cannon and two colorns, together with powder and cartridges, commissary and quartermasters' supplies.

It was under his guidance that the British landed in boats, on the night of April 18th, at Lechmere Point and crossed the main road to Charlestown at the "Red House"; it was the only route by which Cambridge could be reached without crossing Charles River (excepting, of course, by way of Charlestown); and, moreover, the only landing-place for boats loaded with troops, between Charlestown peninsula and Cambridge, was at the mouth of Willis Creek, also for that reason called "Cambridge River." It was for these reasons believed that the British, in any attack on Cambridge, would come up Willis Creek, which was navigable by boats as far as the ford, and there waist-deep at three-quarters tide, and because it was only half a mile from the ford to the Red House by a fair road on the easterly bank of Willis Creek. This was recognized as the weak point of the American position at Cambridge, and Fort No. 3 was built near the Red House to cover the road from Lechmere Point. Patterson's regiment was posted there permanently, with Putnam's advanced force of 1000 men at Inman's farm, within half a mile, to support him.

It has seemed desirable to define the military importance of this key of the American position at Cambridge, because of the part it played in the movements of the American reserves during the battle.

THE BRITISH PLAN OF OPERATIONS TO RAISE THE SIEGE  
OF BOSTON.

We know, from General Howe's letter to his brother of June 12th and from General Burgoyne's letter to Lord Stanley of June 25th, the British plan of campaign decided upon on June 12th; namely, to seize Dorchester Neck on June 18th; thence to march to Roxbury with the three divisions of Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne, to hold both places with redoubts and some 500 men; then with the entire force available to cross over to Charlestown; thence to this cross-road and either attack or turn the American position at Cambridge. The plan was to take Dorchester first, Roxbury second, and lastly to cross the Charles to Charlestown and thence march to Cambridge "with all we can muster" — a force of highly disciplined and well-armed brigades, numbering at least twelve veteran regiments, whose backs no enemy had ever seen, led by three of the most brilliant and daring major-generals of the British army. Well might they look for an easy victory over twice their number of raw troops, poorly armed, with only a month's training as regiments, and absolutely ignorant of the necessity for brigade organization to assure tactical co-operation on an open battlefield. It can hardly be doubted that, on any open field of battle, such troops as the British regiments — every one of which kept its organization to the last at Bunker Hill in spite of an average loss of 40 per cent in killed and wounded — would have swept through Ward's raw army like a tornado.

This was fully understood by the American generals; but, after careful consideration of the whole situation, they decided that, if well covered by intrenchments in a position which could not be turned and which therefore must be assailed in front, the greater skill of our men as marksmen would



largely offset their deficiency in regimental and brigade field movements, and enable them to inflict severe losses on the enemy before retreating.

That there was no intention that Prescott should keep possession of Charlestown Heights in case of victory seems conclusive from the following facts: first, that Prescott's detachments marched without blankets and with only one day's rations; second, that his infantry had only fifteen cartridges per man and his artillery twelve rounds per gun; third, that of the fourteen pieces of artillery at Cambridge, two guns were six-pounder brass field-pieces and twelve were three-pounder iron guns — cannon too small and of too short range to damage the enemy in the town or their shipping in the harbor of Boston; fourth, that there was no reserve ammunition to speak of at Cambridge for the infantry, and not enough for a single day's artillery bombardment of Boston and the shipping, even if they had guns of sufficient size on the Heights of Charlestown, which they did not have.

Why, then, was it decided to provoke, nay to compel, the British to attack? Nothing short of an immediate and overwhelming danger to the very existence of the Provincial army would warrant such a desperate alternative.

On June 15th, possibly not until the morning of June 16th, secret but reliable information reached the American Headquarters at Cambridge of the British plan for the destruction of our army and the crushing of armed resistance in New England, in a short but decisive campaign of perhaps three days, — which had been decided upon at the British Council of War on June 12th. We know from Howe's letters of June 12th, now published for the first time with this paper, the details of this plan. On June 18th their plan was to be put into operation.

As already stated, on an open battlefield where the troops could be manœuvred, the American army was in no condition

to meet a well-disciplined veteran army under skilful and dashing generals: with such an army on their flank and rear, the Cambridge Lines would be of no use to our army; the alternative presented would be either to abandon the Cambridge Lines without a battle, or to court certain rout on an open battlefield; the former seemed the only practical way to save our army from immediate destruction. So at least thought General Howe when he wrote on June 12th, explaining his plan to attack or turn the American position at Cambridge, "In either case, I suppose the Rebels will move from Cambridge, and that we shall take and keep possession of it."

When General Howe landed at Charlestown about noon on June 17th, he apparently expected to drive away the Provincials without any great loss and then proceed to carry out his original plan for marching to Cambridge, while General Clinton was to move his division direct from Boston to the mouth of Willis Creek — for which purpose part of his division had been sent on the "Symetry" transport ready to land there covered by the two gondolas (flat-boats each armed with a twelve-pounder cannon and protected by planked-up sides). To attack Cambridge "with all we can muster" and then hold it seems to have been Howe's plan, to be carried into effect as soon as he had driven the Provincials from Charlestown.

This seems clearly the plan of operations from the following facts: first, the British troops named for the movement carried their blankets and three days' rations; second, half of Clinton's division and the remaining companies of Grenadiers and Light Infantry were marched to the North Battery after Howe's division had embarked, ready to embark there when ordered; third, all the troops remaining in Boston were ordered to be ready "to march at a moment's warning"; fourth, the pioneers were ordered to march immediately to

the South Battery and report for duty to Colonel Cleveland, who, as engineer (as well as chief of artillery), had charge of all intrenching operations. Evidently Howe expected to sleep that night at General Ward's headquarters.

#### THE AMERICAN PLAN TO DEFEAT THE BRITISH DESIGNS ON DORCHESTER.

As we have already stated that General Ward had secret intelligence of the British plan of campaign, let us understand more exactly how complete and exact was his information of it. We have as our authority no less a man than Samuel Adams, an intimate friend of General Ward; he told his favorite nephew, Judge Allen, that Ward had secret information from Boston "that the British were about to take possession of Dorchester Heights; and to divert them from their object, a close approach to the enemy was made by intrenching on Breed's Hill, which had the desired effect until the Provincials could take possession of Dorchester Heights." Evidently, from Howe's and Burgoyne's letters, he was correctly informed.

In this statement we have the problem very hotly discussed at the Council of War held at General Ward's headquarters on June 15th and 16th, where were gathered not only the American generals, but the Committee of Safety, invested with the supreme executive power of the Province of Massachusetts; the problem was more than a military problem in that it incidentally involved the great political issue,—the future relation of New England and probably of all the other colonies to the Crown. The American campaign objective was to compel the British army to evacuate Boston, and thereby nullify the king's attempt to deprive us of our political rights and self-government. If the British army

should hold Dorchester Heights, which commanded the sea approach to Boston, they would keep open sea communication for reinforcements and supplies and hold Boston indefinitely against any force the Americans could bring against them. Therefore the British must be prevented, at all hazards, from executing their plan to seize Dorchester peninsula on June 18th.

That the possession of Dorchester Neck was but a preliminary step to the seizure of Charlestown and was part of the information from Boston under discussion at General Ward's headquarters, appears from the report of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress to the Continental Congress of June 20, 1775, which explains the reason for the Provincial occupation of Charlestown as a military necessity; namely, "Having good intelligence that General Gage was about to take possession of advantageous posts in Charlestown and on Dorchester point," etc.

That the movement on Charlestown was understood by General Ward to be part of a comprehensive plan to destroy the American army at Cambridge, we have General Ward's own statement to his grandson, already quoted: "that when he learned that they [Prescott's Fatigue Party] were attacked by a detachment of British troops who had passed over in boats from Boston, he considered it a *feint* on the part of the British to draw the main army from headquarters at Cambridge to the battle-ground; and then, the larger portion of their troops being still in Boston, push them across the river, land them at Lechmere's Point, and proceed directly to Cambridge—destroy the magazines there and close the avenue at Charlestown Neck; whereby the Provincials would be enclosed within the peninsula of Charlestown, where, by reason of small supplies of ammunition and subsistence they could not long hold out." It was for this reason that General Ward expected that the main force of the British would make

a sudden dash upon Cambridge by way of Lechmere Point and that the *main battle* would be fought at Cambridge.

The foregoing evidence seems conclusive that the *whole* of the British plan was correctly reported to General Ward and was thoroughly considered by the Council of War at his headquarters.

Unquestionably the danger was imminent and overwhelming in its scope: the enemy must be "diverted from their object to take possession of Dorchester Heights" on June 18th, whatever the risk and cost; otherwise the American plan of campaign would prove a dismal failure. But the rest of the British plan, following the seizure of Dorchester Heights, was even a greater danger; the British intention evidently was to compel the American army at Cambridge to fight on an open field of battle, where the British would have every advantage, where the American army must surely be destroyed. The only alternative was to abandon their position and magazines, which could hardly fail to result in the dispersion of the blockading army and probably end the armed resistance of New England. In either event the Siege of Boston would be raised within a week.

The situation was extremely critical, almost desperate. The only apparent chance of success for the American army was to compel the enemy to attack them behind intrenchments; that the intrenchments should present a short front with flanks so protected that they could be attacked only in front; that the intrenched position should be so selected that the line of retreat should be covered. Therefore it was decided to risk not more than 2000 men for this work, who should do all possible damage to the enemy before retreating upon the main army at Cambridge. In this way it was hoped not only to divert the British from their purpose to seize Dorchester Heights on June 18th, but to cripple their Field Force so as to delay, even if it did not prevent, them from

carrying out their plan for raising the Siege of Boston. Nor was it overlooked that the British occupation and fortification of Charlestown would require a very material portion of their force otherwise available for field operations, by which alone could the siege be raised. All things considered, this bold and almost desperate decision to compel the enemy to attack a moderate sized detachment of the American army at Charlestown without risking a general engagement with the whole army at Cambridge, which was to hold fast to its intrenched position within the Cambridge Lines, was a well-considered and extremely military decision, as creditable to the military sagacity of the American generals as the bold and comprehensive plan of the British major-generals for raising the Siege of Boston.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN PLAN.

The execution of this plan was apparently intrusted to General Putnam, whose strenuous advocacy of it had convinced the Council of War that it was the best possible plan of action in spite of its apparent rashness. To carry it out a fatigue party must be detailed, and the importance of keeping the purpose a profound secret even from our own troops was recognized; the fewer who should know it the less the chance of its becoming known to the enemy. To send out an unusually large fatigue party at night with a corresponding amount of intrenching tools would proclaim its object as clearly as a proclamation by the town-crier; but if that same force was sent with merely a day's rations and without blankets it would indicate nothing unusual where troops were constantly moved from one post to another in the ordinary conditions of military operations for temporary purposes; and such a movement with these precautions would give no ground for suspecting the great object of that night's march.

Sometime in the afternoon of June 16th orders were issued to Colonel Prescott, Colonel Bridge, and Lieutenant-colonel Brickett, commanding Frye's regiment, for a certain number of men from their respective regiments for duty that night. So far as we know, no intrenching tools were ordered to be brought by them and no one, except probably the regimental commanders, appears to have had any suspicion of where they were going or the purpose of their march; but when the column was formed on Cambridge Common and the venerable President Langdon of Harvard College prayed for their success and asked God to protect them they probably realized that their mission was one of importance and danger. The troops who marched with Colonel Prescott from Cambridge Common at nine o'clock on the evening of Friday, June 16th, were all Massachusetts troops, their number probably not over 800 — 11 companies of Prescott's regiment, 7 companies of Frye's regiment, and 4 companies of Bridge's regiment are all which are represented in this list of the killed, and those three regiments were hotly engaged at the Redoubt and Breastwork; we can hardly think that any company there engaged failed to swell the list of the killed.

As to the Connecticut troops detailed for this fatigue party from Putnam's advanced post at Inman's farm, we have interesting and suggestive information in the diary of Lieutenant-colonel Storrs, commanding Putnam's regiment:

“June 16<sup>th</sup> — Expecting an engagement soon. — After-  
“noon. Orders came for drafting 31 men from my  
“Company, and the same from all the Companies be-  
“longing to Connecticut. Sent off Lieut. Dana, Sergt  
“Fuller, Corp! Webb, and 28 privates, who at 8  
“o'clock went down to Bunker's Hill — together with a  
“large detachment of troops from this Province where  
“they threw up an intrenchment. . . . June 17<sup>th</sup> — At  
“noon orders came to turn out immediately; that the  
“Regulars were landing at sundry places. Went to

“Head Quarters received orders to repair to [Fort] N<sup>o</sup> 1  
“and defend it. No enemy appearing, orders came that  
“our people at the entrenchment were retreating and for  
“us to cover their retreat. I immediately marched to  
“their relief.”

From these brief entries in Colonel Storr's Diary we know that orders for fatigue duty on the night of June 16th were received by Colonel Storrs that afternoon; that one subaltern and thirty enlisted men were detailed from each company; that the Connecticut details marched direct to Charlestown at eight o'clock that night, where they were joined by a large detachment of Massachusetts troops, and that an intrenchment there was made that night; that the rest of the Connecticut troops were retained at the advanced position at Inman's farm until noon of June 17th, when they were ordered to form, ready to repel the enemy, who were reported “landing at sundry places”; that presently orders came for the regiment to march to Fort No. 1 — the American extreme Right on Charles River — and defend it; that later orders came that our troops being on their retreat from Charlestown the regiment was to march to cover their retreat.

It is a part of the history of this battle that Colonel Prescott's detachment of Massachusetts troops consisted of 300 of his own regiment and detachments from Bridge's and Frye's regiments and 200 Connecticut troops under Captain Knowlton, which Colonel Prescott, in his letter of August 25, estimates at “about 1000 men.” It is doubtful whether he had as many as 800 men besides the Connecticut force under Knowlton; for, as already stated, we can account for no more than 7 companies of Frye's and 4 companies of Bridge's regiments, — 11 companies, — which was the same number of companies that Prescott had of his own regiment estimated by him at 300 men. But when we turn to the Connecticut troops we find that they consisted of details of 30 men each from the four



companies of Captains Chester, Clark, Moseley, and Storrs, or 120 men. This would materially reduce the number of Prescott's Fatigue Party at least to 900, probably somewhat less.

We know from Colonel Storr's Diary that Captain Knowlton with the detachments from the Connecticut troops at Inman's farm started at eight o'clock that night; and we also know — from the letter of Peter Brown, company clerk in Prescott's regiment, to his mother under date of June 25 — that Prescott did not leave Cambridge Common until nine o'clock, when Colonel Prescott marched at the head of his column, preceded by two sergeants carrying dark lanterns. We find that the direct road from Inman's farm to the Red House Redoubt (Fort No. 3) crossed Willis Creek by the lower bridge, while that from Cambridge Common crossed by the upper bridge. The object of the march was kept a profound secret until Prescott's column reached Charlestown Neck, where they found a General (Putnam) and Colonel Gridley, the chief engineer of the army, with intrenching tools in wagons. Apparently, for the purpose of keeping the object of the expedition secret, General Putnam had taken the intrenching tools of his own regiment with the 120 men detailed from four companies of his regiment and had left Inman's farm an hour earlier, and by a different road than Prescott. We know beyond question that Prescott and Putnam had quite a heated discussion when they reached the summit of Bunker Hill as to where the intrenchment should be made, and that it was finally settled by Putnam leading the way to Breed's Hill, where Gridley staked out a Redoubt 44 yards square with a redan for flank fire on its southerly face; then about midnight work was commenced and was pressed most diligently all that night with constant reliefs. The site selected for the Redoubt seems to have been admirably suited for the purpose; General Howe says of it that "the spot on which it

was placed commanded all around it." To cover the open ground on the left of the Redoubt, the east side of the Redoubt was extended northerly 120 yards by a Breastwork, built of parallel walls of sods filled with new-mown grass, down the Hill towards the Mystic as far as the edge overhanging the impassable Slough. Thus the Left of Prescott was protected by the Slough, and the Redoubt, being an enclosed work, was deemed sufficient to cover his Right. This line of 164 yards front constituted the fighting line, the first line of battle. Later, a second line of battle was formed 200 yards to the rear, extending from Mystic Beach over Breed's Hill southerly to the main street of the town, a distance of about 700 yards; this second line covered the American Line of Retreat as well as both the Right and the Left flanks of the Redoubt, the Rail Fence Line being the Left part of that second line of battle.

The work was discovered at daylight by the watch on the "Lively" frigate, which immediately opened fire upon it and sent ashore an officer to inform General Gage. A Council of War was summoned at the Old State House, and it was unanimously decided that action must be immediately taken. There is said to have been a decided difference of opinion as to the method best suited to the occasion; that Generals Clinton and Grant were decidedly in favor of crossing to the mouth of Willis Creek — the only landing-place for troops between Charlestown and Cambridge — and thence to follow the Charlestown Road to Charlestown Neck, and there cut off the American Retreat from Charlestown. But General Gage is said to have objected as strongly to leaving the troops, thus advanced to Charlestown Neck, open to attack from the rear by the main American army at Cambridge. The result was that it was decided that Howe should cross the river with his division and attack the Americans in front; but at the same time it was apparently agreed that half of Clinton's

division should be embarked on the transport "Symetry" and sent close to the mouth of Willis Creek, ready to land under cover to two armed flat-boats ("gondolas") as soon as Howe should rout the Provincials on Breed's Hill, whom he was to follow in their retreat towards Cambridge with his division; that then Clinton's force would intercept their retreat to Cambridge while Howe attacked them in their rear; thus it was believed the Provincial force in Charlestown would be captured or dispersed, after which the combined divisions of Howe and Clinton would either attack or turn the American Centre at Cambridge, and settle the question once for all, before dark that very day whether the king's troops should be blockaded in Boston.

Preparations were at once made; the troops were to be provided with three days' cooked rations, to carry their blankets ready to occupy Cambridge that night. Pioneers under Colonel Cleveland were to march to the South Battery ready to embark. The entire force in Boston was ordered to be in readiness to march at a moment's notice. Twelve guns were got ready to accompany General Howe; the calibre of these guns tells the story of the purpose for which they were sent—something quite different from the ordinary field artillery; there were, in addition to four 6-pounder field-guns ordinarily sent with infantry, four 12-pounders and four 5½-inch howitzers, such as were used in attacking well-fortified positions by both direct and vertical fire. These guns were supplied with sixty-six rounds per gun, but Colonel Cleveland reports that only eight of his twelve guns were actually in action; the reason seems to have been that there was no use for the 5½-inch howitzers at Charlestown; at Cambridge, on the contrary, they would have been of very great use in attacking enclosed works. These dispositions of troops and artillery indicate the British intention to sleep at Cambridge that night.

At half-past eleven o'clock the battalions of Grenadiers and Light Infantry, twenty companies of the flower of the army, whom Howe is to lead in person to attack the Provincial Left—little dreaming that more than half, in some of those companies nine out of ten, would be shot down in front of the Grass Fence—and the line companies of the 5th and 38th Regiments form and march to Long Wharf, there to embark in twenty-eight barges for Charlestown; there are 1100 rank and file with 200 officers, sergeants, and drummers; the boats move off, closely watching for the hoisting of the blue, yellow, and red flags ordering their movements; they carry four field-guns and a company of the Royal Artillery to man them. At one o'clock they land at Moulton's Point, the boats returning to Boston for the 43d and 52d Regiments and a few more Grenadier and Light Infantry companies which were then waiting at the North Battery for their turn to cross; with them go over four more field-guns of larger size (12-pounders) and four howitzers of 5½-inch calibre. Thus the whole of Howe's division—about 1860 officers and men—was landed, ready to march to the attack by half-past two o'clock. Immediately on landing the four battalions of the first embarkation were formed in two lines of battle on Moulton's Hill, one hundred yards from the beach, opposite the American Left; four companies of Light Infantry were thrown forward to the Clay Pits to guard Howe's right, and as many line companies of the 38th Regiment to a stone wall on the Bunker Hill Road to guard his left; in front was marshy ground commanded by the four 6-pounder guns brought over with them. These were proper military precautions, though not a shot had been fired from the American Lines.

During this waiting time General Howe had advanced on foot some two hundred yards to the skirmish line and personally reconnoitred the enemy's position. As soon as the second embarkation arrived General Pigot, with the 38th and

43d Regiments, was sent four hundred yards to the left, keeping under the brow of the Hill, there to await orders. His position was directly opposite the east face of the Redoubt about two hundred yards distant, and about the same distance from the houses which lined the main street of Charlestown.

As soon as Colonel Prescott saw from the Redoubt the British landing at Moulton's Point, he sent 150 men of his regiment, under his Lieutenant-colonel and Major, down into the houses of the town to cover his right, and Putnam also sent four or five detached companies, as they arrived, down into the town for the same purpose. These three hundred men loopholed the houses and opened such a galling fire on Pigot's two regiments that he was obliged to face one regiment south, towards the town, to maintain his position. This was well conceived on the part of Colonel Prescott, as it prevented Pigot from attacking the Redoubt until the troops in the loopholed houses were driven away. General Howe said of this fire on Pigot's flank, "It alone would have given him sufficient employment." This necessitated the burning of Charlestown.

Howe acted wisely in thus sending Pigot to his left; for from that position he would not only be ready to attack the Redoubt when ordered, but meanwhile he would cover Howe's left and rear in his intended attack upon the American Left near the Mystic River—the Rail Fence Line.

At the time Colonel Prescott sent half of his regiment into the town to cover his right he also ordered Captain Knowlton to take his 120 Connecticut troops with the two small 3-pounder guns (hitherto in the Redoubt, but useless there because the gun platforms had broken down) to cover his left. Although the Breastwork extended northerly to the Slough, that impassable obstacle at that point extended only a hundred yards in the rear of the left of the Breastwork, leaving

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an open passage of about eighty yards round the head of the Slough, by which the enemy could turn the American Left. A brookway, starting in the rear of the Redoubt, had cut its way down to the head of the Slough; though dry in June the latter part of its course was a sharp ravine, with its westerly bank jutting out like a bastion and commanding the eighty yards of intervalle between the head of the Slough and the walled-up road connecting Breed's Hill with Bunker Hill. On this steep natural bastion Knowlton threw up a triple line of breastworks — three little redans (so to speak) one above the other, so as to cover the dangerous intervalle with a triple line of fire; the British never succeeded in crossing the intervalle, but De Berniere's map marks it as the point "*from which the Grenadiers received a very heavy fire.*" This defence was made of fence rails, clods, and whatever loose material was at hand; however rude in construction, it was a brilliant idea to convert this jutting out of a steep bank into a three-tier bastion front.

Early that morning Colonel Stark and his Lieutenant-colonel Wyman had come over from Medford to study personally the situation at Charlestown, with a view to know beforehand what they might be called upon to do. Upon their return to Medford Stark sent Colonel Wyman with 200 men across the Mystic River to the valley between Winter Hill and Plowed Hill — that is, to a point midway between Medford and Charlestown — there to await orders. The other New Hampshire regiment, Colonel Reed's, had been stationed since June 12th at the little "Neck settlement" near Charlestown Neck, at the meeting of the Medford and Cambridge roads to Charlestown.

The first order to reinforce the troops at Charlestown was sent to Colonel Stark, under whose orders was Reed's regiment also. As soon as the men were supplied with ammunition Stark marched from Medford, picking up Lieu-

tenant-colonel Wyman and his 200 men at the foot of Winter Hill and Colonel Reed's regiment at the Neck settlement; the combined force, Stark says, was 700. Upon reaching the top of Bunker Hill the troops halted and were set at work by General Putnam upon intrenchments to cover our men in their expected retreat; they continued their work for ten to fifteen minutes. Meanwhile Colonel Stark proceeded down the hill towards the "Lines," keeping on the Mystic side to avoid the British cannonade. This brought him in view of Mystic Beach, back of Moulton's Hill: he there saw the British Light Infantry forming in column of attack on the beach out of the sight of Prescott in the Redoubt; as a veteran officer in the French War Stark instinctively knew the full significance of that formation, and hastening back to his men he ordered them to drop their spades and rushed them down the hill to a point abreast of Knowlton's triple breastworks. A pasture fence, something less than a hundred yards in front of the junction of Elm Street with the Bunker Hill Road, ran across from that road northerly to the Mystic Beach; it was of field stones two feet high, on top of which was a strong post and rail fence two rails high. Through the rails other fence rails were thrust, on which new-mown hay was heaped; though of slight value as a breastwork, it made an excellent cover for his men, who were ordered to lie down behind it: on the beach stones rolled down from neighboring stone walls were piled up, making a low wall down to the water's edge, behind which a company in three ranks was laid down. Such was the famous "Rail Fence Line" behind which 700 New Hampshire men, farmers' and hunters' sons whose guns rarely failed in hunting game, lay in wait for the enemy. Stark had driven stakes forty paces in front of his line of battle; not a gun was to be fired until the enemy reached the line of stakes; the guns were loaded with "buck and ball" (four buckshot and one bullet), a most effective

charge at short range. When the eleven companies of Light Infantry, moving in column of attack, reached the line of stakes, sheets of flame spurted out from the Rail Fence Line; for ten minutes the Light Infantry were mowed down like grass, without being allowed to deploy; then they broke and fell back in utter confusion, leaving quite half their number killed or wounded. "I never saw sheep lying thicker in a sheep fold," said Colonel Stark. Such was the fate of Howe's attempt to turn the American Left by surprise.

His plan was to have the Light Infantry attack and turn the American extreme left flank supported by the Grenadiers attacking in front and the 5th and 52d following as a reserve; but the Grenadiers, delayed by the marshy ground and the strong pasture fences, did not come up until the Light Infantry had been utterly disabled for further fighting that day. The enemy now knew his plan; surprise was out of the question and Howe halted the Grenadiers before they came under fire and prepared for a general assault along the whole line, under cover of which he was determined with the Grenadiers to carry the key of the American position at the crossroads in rear of the Rail Fence at all hazards: he sent orders for Pigot to attack the Redoubt in front with the 38th and 43d Regiments; to the 52d Regiment was assigned the duty of taking the Breastwork, to the 5th of forcing a passage round the head of the Slough, while he in person led his gallant Grenadiers directly against the Rail Fence in front.

But Pigot reported that he could not advance against the Redoubt until the Americans in the town on his left were driven out, and he requested that the town be set on fire by shells from Boston. Thus there was quite a lull between the first and second attacks, while an officer was crossing by boat to Copp's Hill with this urgent message.



During this interval the British Light Infantry were rallied and reorganized, though they were practically hors du combat for the rest of the day; the 5th and 52d Regiments, hitherto held in reserve on Moulton's Hill, advanced toward their destined positions, and the Artillery moved forward to sweep the interval between the Breastwork and the Rail Fence with their fire. On the American side similar dispositions were made to meet the impending blow: Putnam had brought Callender's two deserted guns to the Rail Fence; reinforcing companies were posted between the Breastwork and the Rail Fence; a new line of defence was made on a cartway (now Green Street) to the right rear of the Redoubt, to be defended by the troops driven out of the houses of the town, now set on fire by carcasses thrown by General Burgoyne into the town from his eight-inch mortar on Copp's Hill.

The order to advance was given; the British troops advanced slowly, halting from time to time to allow the Artillery to shake the American Line; then, advancing again, the Infantry opened the heavy rolling platoon fire, which had won the day at Minden and Quebec. But Prescott in the Redoubt, Bridge in the Breastwork, Putnam and Stark at the Rail Fence were inexorable in their commands. "Not a shot until you can see the white of their eyes," shouts Prescott; "Not a shot until you can see the buttons on their waistcoats," shouts Putnam; "Not a shot until they reach those stakes forty paces in front," shouts Stark. And then, when the dead line was reached, continuous sheets of flame burst forth and continued for some twenty minutes; whole companies crumbled beneath that fire, especially in front of the Rail Fence, where Howe pressed forward without faltering with his Grenadiers; the four companies on the right of the battalion at the head of the Grenadier column lost three-fourths of their number in twenty minutes; Lieutenant-colonel Abercrombie, who commanded the Grenadiers, here

fell mortally wounded; General Howe at one time stood alone, surrounded by his twelve staff officers, all either killed or wounded. At last the whole line fell back in great confusion. The second attack had failed.

Satisfied by these two bloody repulses that the American Left was impregnable, but still determined to save the New England Colonies for the king, Howe decided to concentrate his entire force on the American Right and to attack the Redoubt and Breastwork simultaneously with the bayonet and without firing. The troops were ordered to throw off their knapsacks and to strip for the fight; many threw aside their gorgeous red coats, and like the Americans, many of them also fought in their shirt sleeves.

Clinton arrived to head his two regiments, which had been sent to reinforce Howe. These were the 47th Regiment and the 1st Marines; with them were three fresh companies of Grenadiers and as many more of Light Infantry. Clinton was to lead the left, Howe the right, and Pigot the centre in this third attack; Clinton to attack the south face of the Redoubt, Pigot the east face, and Howe the Breastwork, leaving the shattered battalions of Grenadiers and Light Infantry, posted well to the rear, to cover his right. Thus some 1500 men were to rush with the bayonet upon some 400 men, for no more had room to fight in the Breastwork and Redoubt. Those brave 400 had scarcely a bayonet and their cartridges were almost gone; they held their fire until the enemy were within less than half the distance, as before — some accounts reduce the old forty paces to eight or ten paces — so that every shot might tell. The slaughter again was frightful, but only for a short time, for the assailants when close under the parapet were safe. Prescott, recognizing this, ordered the men whose guns were still loaded to fall back to the opposite side of the Redoubt and

shoot down the enemy as they mounted it in front. So fatal was this last fire that scarcely one of those who first mounted the parapet was not shot down; as Lieutenant Richardson of the 18th "Royal Irish" Regiment mounted the parapet he waved his sword shouting "Victory" and instantly fell. Adjutant Waller of the Marines writes thus of the final assault: "We rushed on, leaped the ditch and climbed the parapet under the most heavy fire. One captain and one subaltern fell in getting up and one [other] captain and one [other] subaltern were wounded in our corps. Three captains of the 52d were killed on the parapet and others that I know nothing of."

General Howe writes that the Redoubt was "most obstinately defended to the last; thirty of the Rebels having been killed by bayonets within it."

When we examine the list of killed and wounded we find that Prescott's, Frye's, and Bridge's regiments, which garrisoned the Redoubt and Breastwork, stormed in the third attack, lost 73 killed and 88 wounded, being an average of 1 killed to 1.20 wounded; as 1 to 4 is the ordinary average put out of action by infantry fire, these figures indicate desperate hand-to-hand fighting.

In fact, so stubbornly was the battle contested, and so much hand-to-hand fighting occurred, that the American loss was 115 killed to 305 wounded, or 1 to 2.65; and of the 30 prisoners taken 20 were mortally wounded, mostly in the Redoubt. As the British loss was 226 killed to 828 wounded, or 1 to 3.65, we have evidence of the terrible significance of the order to assault "with the bayonet."

The retreat was now inevitable: Prescott and Bridge, parrying bayonets with their swords, lead off their men through the enemy swarming into the Redoubt on three sides; they reach the second line of battle at the Rail Fence, which opens to let them through and then closes to face the

advancing enemy and to cover the retreat. Five companies of fresh troops join Stark, Reed, and Knowlton as rear guard; the wounded are carried off to places of safety, so that only thirty prisoners fell into the victor's power as prisoners of war, of whom twenty were mortally wounded, dying in Boston within a brief time.

The retreat was conducted with skill and without the least panic. Burgoyne says of the battle and retreat: "The defence was well conceived and obstinately maintained. The retreat was no rout; it was even covered with bravery and military skill and proceeded no farther than the next hill, where a new post was taken, new intrenchments instantly begun."

It was a common mistake for a long time to discredit the military skill of both the British and American generals responsible for the battle of Bunker Hill; to describe the Provincials as "an undisciplined collection of men, that was hardly worthy to be called an army" (Buckingham's Biography of Benjamin Russell, p. 5). But with the critical study of the military problems here presented, and the indisputable evidence now available in the unpublished letters of General Howe, we may form a more correct opinion.

As to its historic status among the battles of the world, we find in that military classic — Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World* — the true basis for its claim to immortal remembrance, carefully defined thus:

"It is not the number of killed and wounded in a battle that determines its general historic importance. . . . It is its paramount importance to mankind which entitles it to be reckoned among those few battles of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent history."

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In conclusion, it may be said of the battle of Bunker Hill that it not only defeated the British campaign objective—to raise the Siege of Boston, and won the American campaign objective—to continue the Siege of Boston until the British army evacuated the town to avoid surrendering; but that it also assured the support of all the other colonies, which ultimately resulted in the independence of the United States as a sovereign nation, and now as a world power.

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#### ORIGINAL MAPS APPENDED TO THIS PAPER.

I. “Military Topography of Boston, on June 17, 1775: General Washington’s Revolutionary War Campaign Map after a Survey ordered by him.” This map is a copy, reproduced on one-half the scale, of No. 61 in the Bostonian Society’s Collection of Maps: it exactly follows the topography of the original map, but omits fortifications erected subsequent to June 17, 1775.

II. “American Reserves at the Battle of Bunker Hill.” This map is based upon Des Barres’ map of Boston and the Vicinity (No. 57, Bostonian Society’s Collection) and Pelham’s map of Boston and Environs (No. 62, Bostonian Society’s Collection) published respectively by Acts of Parliament of August 5, 1775, and June 2, 1777. The original map, made by me in 1887, on a scale of 1000 feet to the inch, is here reproduced *on a scale of 2500 feet to the inch*.

III, IV, V. The Relief Maps of the First, Second, and Third Attacks are reproduced *on a scale of 900 feet to the inch*. The original Relief Map, made by me in 1887 on the scale of 400 feet to the inch, was based on Lieutenant Page’s official map of the battle (published in 1777) from actual survey made by Captain



**British Effective Field Force, June 17, 1776.**  
*"The fighting men of the British, we have been informed, amount to about 3000. The 3 battalions, including the 1st Battalion from Ireland, are coming into the country, and every one of them in addition, which makes it very doubtful if they will have time to come to the assistance of the Town, in this supposition the Ministry are deceived, but not the British themselves."*

#### The American Centre.

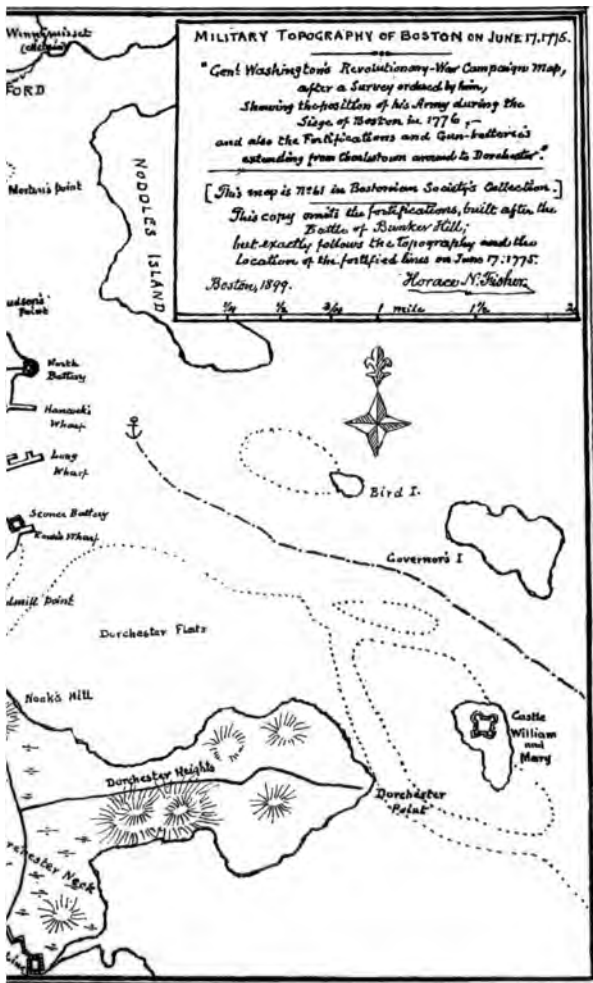
The Cambridge Line on Dorset Hill, three times as high as Bullard Hill, were built to cover what was considered by the American General the probable line of the enemy's attack. The American Right, sitting on Charles River, was secured by Forts Mifflin and Mifflin; it also covered the bridge by which communications were maintained with Roxbury & Dorchester, the extreme Right of the Army.

It was recognized that the weak point of the American Centre was the Mill Creek line that was the line by which the British had marched to Lexington, landing opposite High Farm and crossing the Creek by a deep ford, and thence by Charles Town Lane, between the Creek and Prospect Hill. Moreover, the Creek being most deep at the Ford, it was nearly impassable by boats well up to the bridge caused by the two roads to Charlestown. In this season, the Cambridge Line found very nearly lost, covering the line of approach across the Marsh from High Farm, as well as by the way of Mill Creek, was to cover the latter. Fort Mifflin was built between the two bridges over the Creek. In fact, this fort also formed a first step for the Americans, when advancing or retreating across the Creek by the road to Charlestown. The British advanced position at Inman's Point, covered these bridges and acted as a flanking support for Mifflin, where the British Right was regularly posted. On the night of June 16, the British Right was sent to occupy Fort Mifflin; by the morning of June 17 the Right of the Army probably occupied it; in addition to which was the British General's Camp near the Inman House; this, in view of the British position on the "Thimble" and the bridge to cover their landing by Mill Creek, which later fell into the hands of the British. This was why the British were so confident that the British would be here.



**The British Objective - Plan of operations, unanimously agreed upon by Genl Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne and Burgoyne writes, June 22:** - "It was absolutely necessary that we should make ourselves masters of them before we could begin with Dorchester. Every thing was accordingly arranged. My two Colonies differed one lot in military sentiment; had, in concert with that day, formed the Plan 2 - Genl Howe was to lead Centre; and I was to disembark from the Conway on the Neck; and to take advantage of circumstances, as they offered. On the 17th day of July, we found the enemy had just lost their last stronghold, and were on the Heights of Charlestown. It therefore became necessary to alter our plan, and attack on that side."

**action at Bunker Hill:** according to *Non-Combatants of Worcester*, an intimate friend of Saml Adams, that great Patriot said: —  
 "I find fault with Genl Ward for intrenching on Breed's Hill, to man the Battery, without any fortifications in our rear, but the world  
 seems to be justified for so doing; for he had secret intelligence from Boston, by means of spies, that the British were about to take possession  
 of the town from their object, & close approach to the enemy was made by intrenching on Breed's Hill, which had the desired effect  
 of preventing the British from approaching the city without heavy artillery; until the enemy captured at Ticonderoga arrived, it would have been folly to occupy them."



**Military Topography of Boston as described by British Officers, June 1775.**

Genl Howe to Genl Harvey, Military Secy.  
 June 12, 1775

"The situation the enemy has taken in forming the Blockade is judicious and strong, being well intrenched and with cannon. — The country for thirty miles round is amazingly well situated for their manner of fighting, being covered with woods and small stone-wall enclosures, exceedingly uneven and much cut with ravines."

"The position of the Blockade is with their right at Dorchester, with front of communication to Roxbury where they are in force; continued by posts to Cambridge, the Head Quarters, where they are intrenched; from thence they cross the Mystic to Wimmisynch and to Chelsea, their left."

Genl Burgoyne to Lord Stanley  
 June 22, 1775

"Boston is a peninsula joined to the main land only by a narrow Neck. — A arms of the Sea, and Harbor surround the rest on the other sides. On one of these arms, to the North, is Charlestown and next is a large hill; which is also, like Boston, a peninsula. To the South of the Town is a still larger scope of ground containing three hills joining also to the Main by a tongue of land; which is called Dorchester Neck."

"The heights above described both North and South, command the Town. It was absolutely necessary that we should make ourselves masters of these heights."

Genl Burgoyne to Lord Rockford  
 June 22, 1775

"Look, my Lord, upon the Country near Boston: — it is all fortification! Drive from one hill, you will see the enemy continually retrenched upon the next; and every step must be the slow step of a Siege."

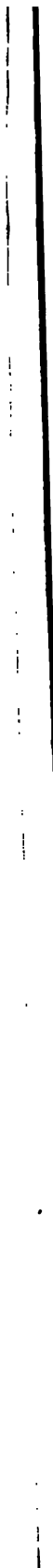
Lieut. Barker's Diary describes Fort Cambridge "a peninsula, as the Lockport Point, in Spring Field is one distant 20 the Fort is a very long ford up to our Middle."

at the Council of War on June 12, 1775 — as stated in Genl Burgoyne's letter to Lord Stanley and Genl Howe's letter to Genl Harvey above cited.

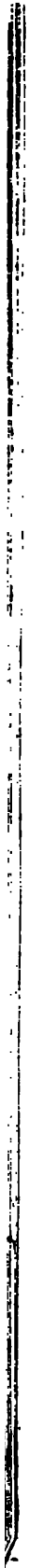
Howe wrote, June 12: — "I have come to my Island of sitting here, with the force, the small harbor, including only the 3 Det<sup>ts</sup> of the First Division from Ireland; — in the first place I would possess Dorchester Neck, placing a redoubt on some upon it; and from thence, it would be possible on the Neck, attack the Fort at Roxbury — being at the same time attended from the Neck of the Town; keep possession of Roxbury by an detachment for a couple of hundred men. Thence to carry all the troops to be collected, over to Charlestown Point and other adjacent Cambridge or, if found advisable upon reconnoitering the situation, there is."

— The 17th Division from Ireland, consisted of the 20<sup>th</sup> Regt and 68 Regt of Foot; all but a few companies of the 20<sup>th</sup> arrived between June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.





**CHARL**



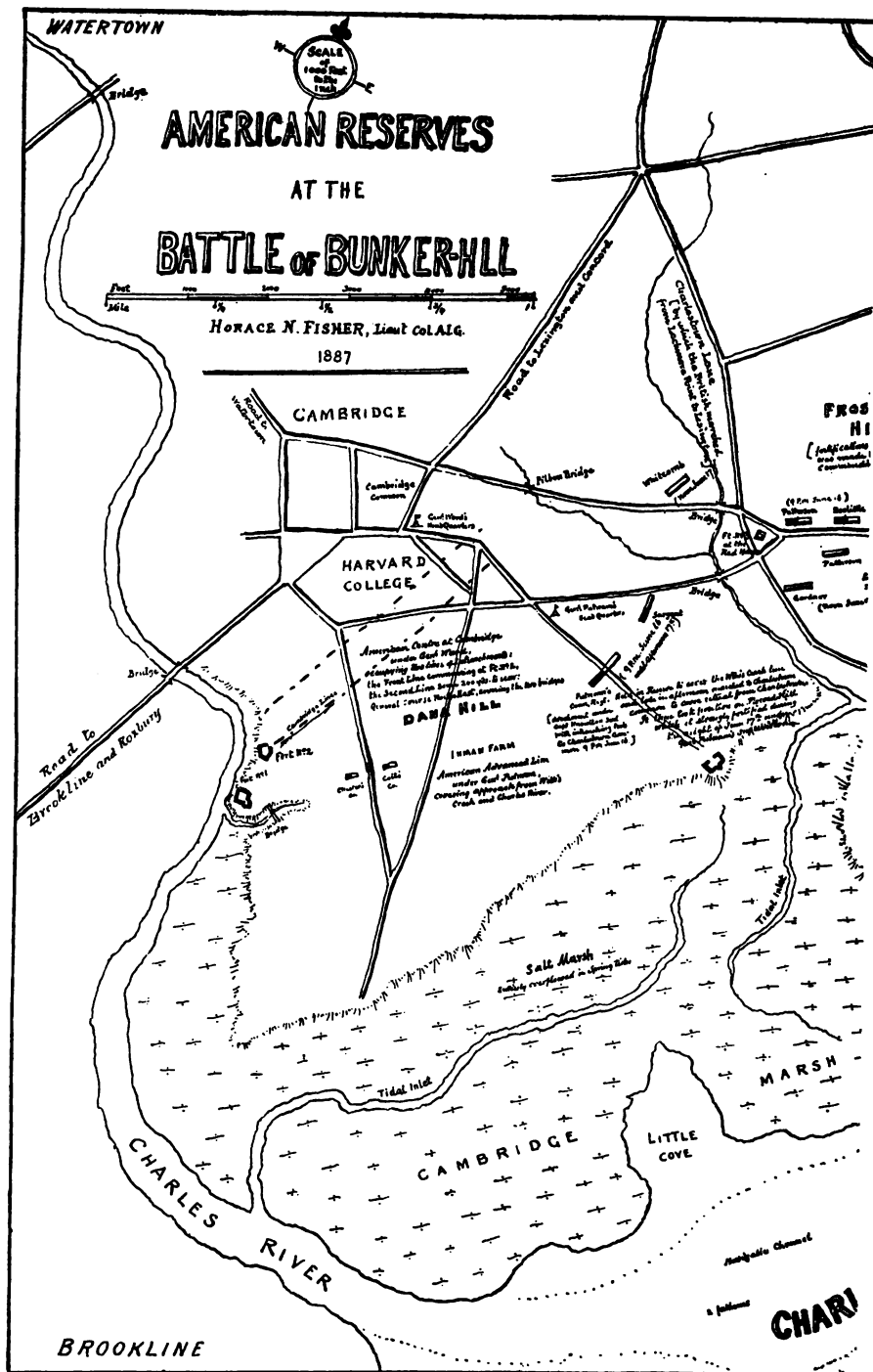


The Plot for 1/2 of a Mile  
 between Mystic Channel  
 and Charlestown Neck

Mystic Channel  
 Map  
 MYSTIC RIVER



**BROOKLINE**

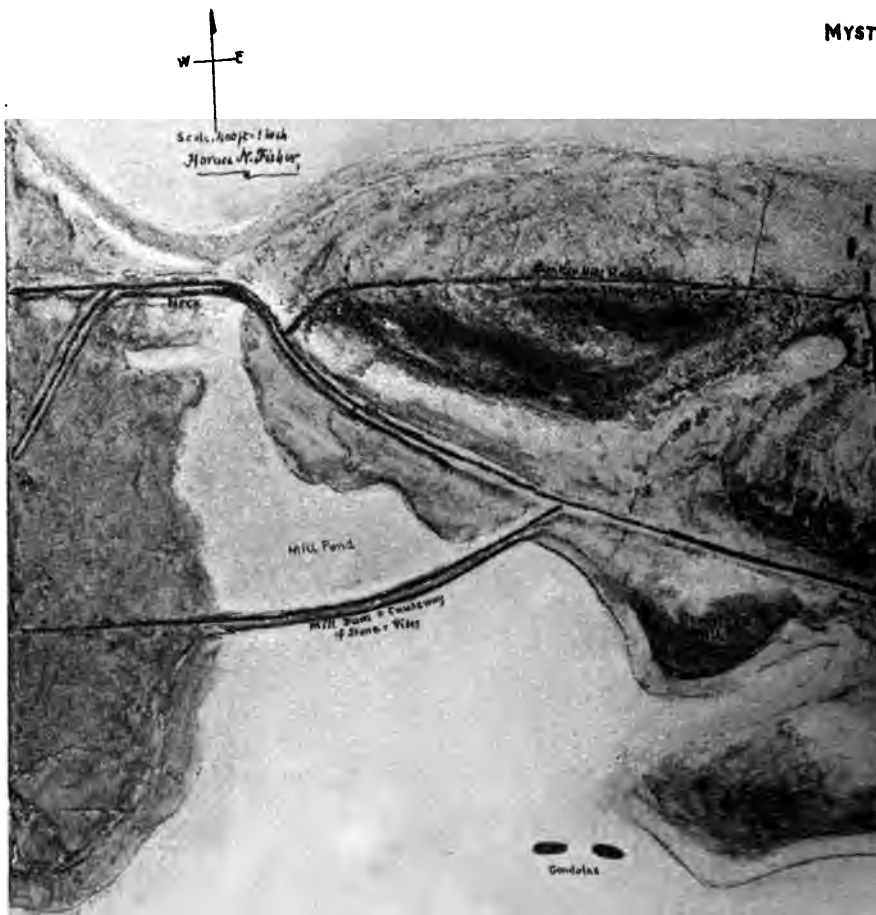








MYSTI



CHARLES











MYSTIC



CHARLES

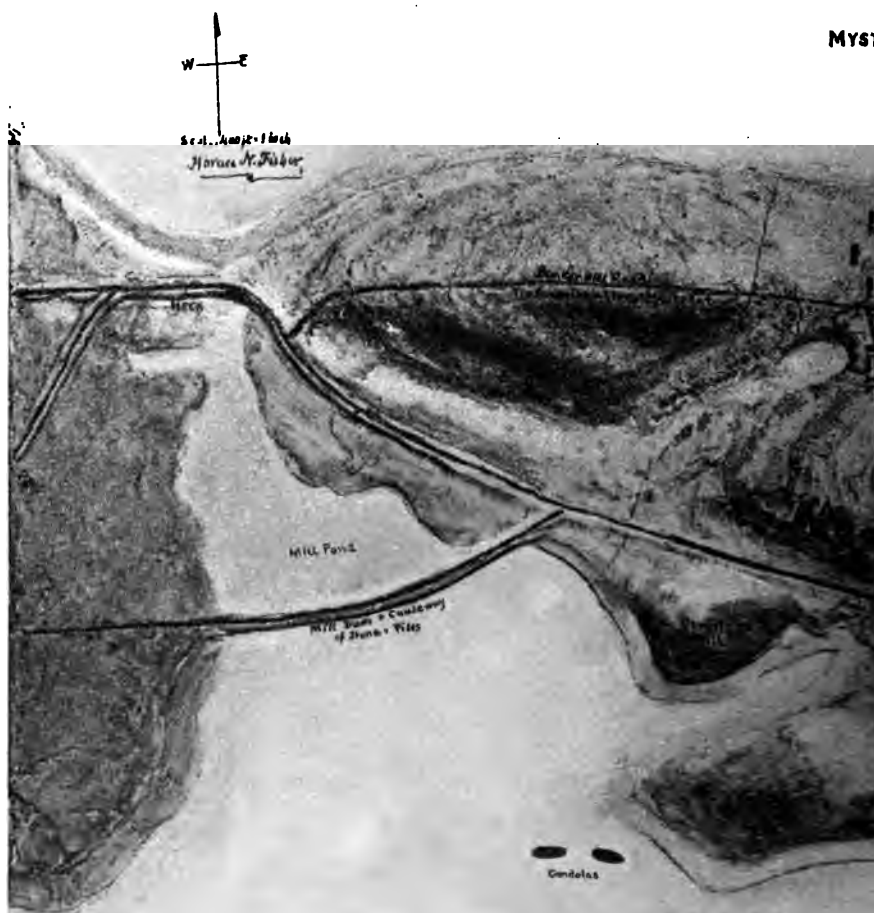








MYST



CHARLES















Montessor, considered correct for distances and bounds ; and on the plan of the battle by Captain Henry de Berniere of the 10th Foot, which was discovered in manuscript and published in 1818, considered correct for the military topography, supplemented by personal research as to topographical details.

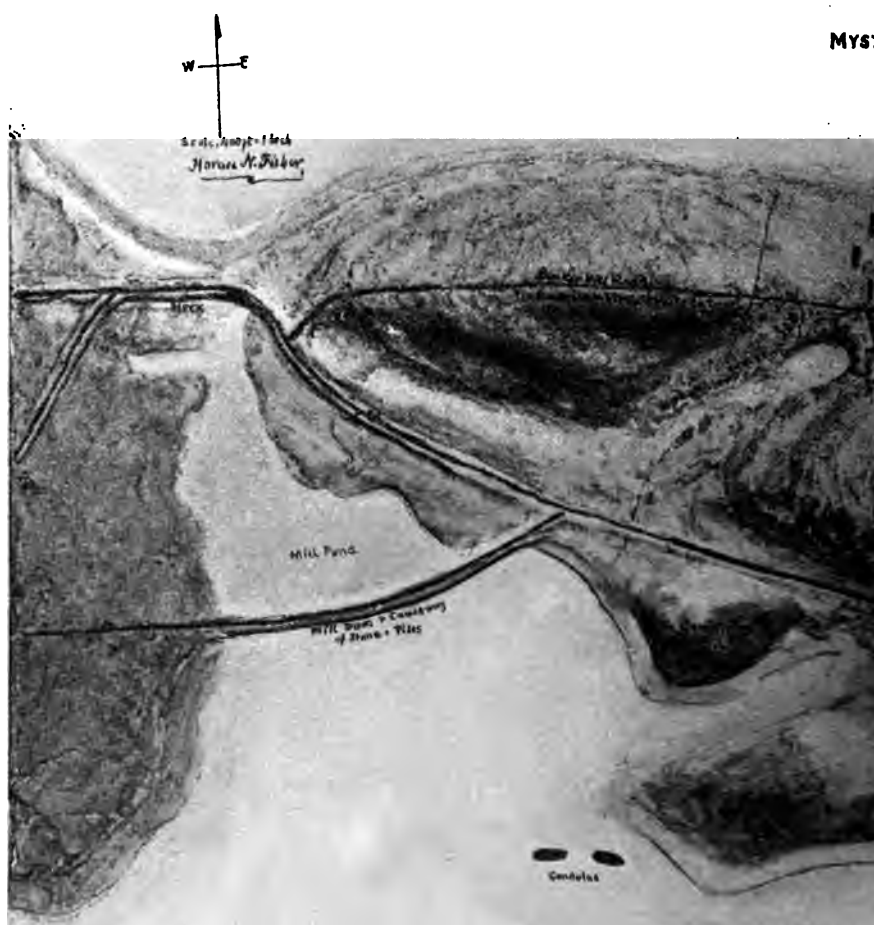
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NOTE. — Lieutenant Page was an engineer officer of the Royal Navy, serving on General Howe's staff ; he was desperately wounded at the second attack, so that the field work on the map was intrusted to Captain Montessor, who was a correct surveyor but in no sense a topographical engineer : hence this map is conspicuous for its failure to present the military topography of the battlefield. Captain de Berniere was General Gage's topographical engineer, employed on reconnaissances in February and March, 1775, of which his reports are highly creditable. His plan of the battle shows all the essentials of military topography ; though not from exact measurements, it is by all odds the best military map of the battle which we have from a competent participant.





MYST



CHARLES









MYST





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1886.

GROVER CLEVELAND.  
OLIVER OTIS HOWARD.

1888.

NELSON APPLETON MILES.  
DOUGLAS PUTNAM.  
DANIEL EDGAR SICKLES.

1891.

WHITELAW REID.

1893.

MELVILLE WESTON FULLER.  
HORACE PORTER.

1894.

ANDREW ELLICOTT KENNEDY  
BENHAM.

1895.

GASTON DE SAHUNE DE LAFAYETTE.

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